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CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN
SCHILLER AND GOETHE,
FROM
1794 TO 1805.

TRANSLATED BY
GEORGE H. CALVERT.



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P R E F A C E .

THE Letters between Schiller and Goethe are a record kept by friendship of the habitual feelings and thoughts of two great Poets. If the translator has adequately executed his grateful task, he will have the pleasure of opening to the American and English reader the richest epistolary treasure that literature contains. There is no other instance of affectionate union between two men of such genius, intellect, and culture; and that, under circumstances peculiarly adapted to promote a rapid interchange of letters. The correspondence, which consists of more than nine hundred letters, embraces ten years of the prime of both, and ended only with Schiller's life. At its opening, Schiller, who had recently been appointed by the Grand Duke of Weimar, Professor of History in the University of Jena, was in his thirty-fifth year, and Goethe, who was one of the Grand Duke's Ministers in Weimar, in his forty-fifth. This proximity of their places of residence fed the correspondence, by keeping their friendship warm through frequent personal intercourse. Their labors animated their letters, the letters created a want of

the fuller and freer communication by conversation, conversation gave fresh impulse to their labors, and thus their friendship, founded on the broadest mutual esteem, and fostered by an ever active circle of invigorating influences, uttered itself in a correspondence as cordial as it is intellectual. Poetry, science, literature, religion, art, philosophy, subjects that are the familiar inmates of such minds, come up constantly, of course, and are touched with the free and masterly strokes to be expected in confidential effusions between Goethe and Schiller. The reader rises with them into the regions where such men have chiefly their being, and there with them partakes of their wholesome indifference to what are commonly regarded as the great interests of life. In the easy, eager, private discussion of the principles that underlie the fundamental departments of human thought, we behold in a manner the secret growth of these two extraordinary minds. We witness the relaxation of giants : we can figure to ourselves what may be the sports of gods.

In putting the German into English, the translator has been as direct and literal as is compatible with our own idiom, preserving at the same time, with the original, the laxness proper to a sincere epistolary style.

Omissions are occasionally made of whole and parts of letters, chiefly of such as relate to business transactions connected with publishers, and with the editing of the *Horen* and *Almanac*. The former are

indicated by stars, the latter will be perceived by chasms in the sequence of the numbers. A few brief notes are added for the assistance of the reader.

This volume contains about one-half of the original work; the remaining portion will follow in another volume of similar size.*

The translator cannot withhold a few words on the passage relating to Goethe in the Phi Beta Kappa oration delivered at Cambridge in 1844. From its elevated birth-place that passage has flown over the whole land. On a formal public occasion a blind and most rude assault has been made on one of the mightiest of the dead, whose soul lives on the earth, and will for ages live, in the exaltation of the loftiest minds. Out of stale German gossip, out of shallow wailings of prosaic critics, shallower clamors of pseudo-patriots, uncharitable magnification of common failings, in a discourse especially designed to enforce the virtue of truth, were compounded those pages reeking with calumny against one of the foremost men of the world, and the most honored man of a people rich in virtue and in genius. Goethe is called "selfish, false," "a bad man," "whose name is throughout Germany almost a synonyme for dissoluteness," "a false man," guilty of "treachery and

* This work was intended to make one of the "Specimens of Foreign Literature," the publication of which was discontinued two or three years since. As probably many who possess that valuable series of translations will like to connect this one with it, its title, through the courteous permission of the editor of the "Specimens," Mr. Ripley, has been adopted.

cold-blooded trifling with the peace and virtue of others," one who could with "the unruffled equanimity of profound self-love calmly survey the ruin he had wrought in hearts that confided in him." On reading such phrases coupled with the name of Goethe, indignation gives place to astonishment at beholding this monstrous brood, begotten by presumption upon a pharisaical morality.

Hard it is to conceive of a sound mind erring so grossly, with knowledge of the works of Goethe; and harder to believe that it should dare to pronounce so sweeping a censure without wide and minute acquaintance with the chief source of evidence on the moral structure of a poet. How little outward testimony survives about Shakspeare; but whoso can read his poetry, may get a knowledge of the man surer and more absolute than could have been gotten even from the fullest contemporaneous opinions. As the tree is known by its fruit, we know that the parent of the Shakspearean progeny must have been a man in whom, in close alliance with a kingly intellect, dwelt, as well the virtues that ennoble, as the graces that beautify, and the affections that sweeten life. Into whatever errors an ardent temperament may have drawn him, they dim not the lucent image of him fixed in our minds by study of his works; nay, we presume not to wish them uncommitted, lest an attempt to better such a bounteous gift from God, should mar but by a tittle the original proportions of one the sum of whose life has been to the world an

immeasurable benefaction. If of Goethe we knew no more than can be learnt from his works, in them there is that will convert the gall of such abusive generalities into a mere nauseating insipidity. When a bad man's brain shall give birth to an Iphigenia, a Clara, a Mignon, a Macaria, you may pluck pomegranates from Plymouth rock, and reap corn on the sands of Sahara.

From the large composition of Goethe's mind, as exhibited in his poetry; from the justness and clear humanity of his nature, deducible from his other copious writings, biographies, travels, criticism, letters; from his known acts of usefulness and generosity; the inference, to a judgment of healthy wholeness, is direct, that he was habitually upright and kind, a man who could not do an injury without atoning for it, nor err without repentance. Of himself, as a writer, he somewhere says, "when I must cease to be moral I have no power more;" and if he had been one who "inwardly felicitated himself upon the rich accession to his artistic domain, furnished from sufferings he had himself wantonly caused," palsied would have been his hand ere he had written a verse, and the spring of poetry within him,—if such can be imagined ever to have existed in a mind of this diabolical capacity,—would have shrivelled to a putrid puddle. "If this is harsh judgment upon Goethe, the voice of his country is liable for it, and not I," says the address. Shame! Shame! Were there even such a voice, what is it worth? Hundreds of

thousands, aye, millions of respectable people there are in this country, who through religious convictions proscribe the play-writer Shakspeare, and who, were they to read Collier's life of the man, would confirm the proscription through their moral code. But what evidence were this to cite before a high literary court!

Goethe is the most complete man of his time. He is the richest specimen of humanity since Shakspeare. In him the manifold capacities of our nature were centered in uncommon individual strength and rare aptness to refinement. With the spontaneous development inherent in such fertility, was early associated a monarchical power of will over this affluence of resources. From youth to old age, his daily endeavor was to cultivate and purify his being. And thus, working his vast faculties of intellect and sympathy to the utmost, relieving the intense hours of poetic creation with scientific research, with the plastic arts, with critical elucidation, with the labors of the statesman, with the duties of theatrical director, with the pleasures of friendship and hospitality, he went on his shining way, having had already in his youth the strength and art to master the fiery passions that threatened to devour him, and to harness them to the car of Poesy, in which, another Apollo, his brow bared to the airs of Heaven, and his eye glancing towards earth, he drove triumphantly and beneficently through the seasons of manhood, showering as he went the blossoms and flowers and fruits

of poetry and wisdom. And yet, this man, so wondrously gifted, and so nobly using his gifts, to whom leading men throughout Europe, statesmen, artists, poets, philosophers, are thankful for their best culture, whose long life ripened in the sunshine of unbroken friendships, who was revered by the spiritual Richter, whom the fervent aspiring Schiller loved and looked up to, this man, who to his fellow men has left a bequest to which that of a hundred Girards is but as a bushel of pebbles to the Pitt diamond, has been the object of all sorts of detraction, to which in this address a new accusation has been added, Goethe being here upbraided, for the first time surely, with being—an Artist !

“He was a great, an unequalled Artist,—Artist, that is the term everywhere applied to him,—a term which, as applied to literary men, I am sorry to find is getting into some repute amongst us as a term of commendation. In Europe, it is generally a term of disparagement, as indicating a writer whose inspiration passes not through the heart, and whose lofty sentiments have no home in his own soul, and no expression in his life.”

This is weakly to mistake the mimicry of smooth handiwork for creation, and the cold expertness of technical practice for the magic of genius. Art cannot be without the closest union of judgment and sensibility ; it implies a marriage between intellect and soul. It is the fairest offspring of the human mind. Its beginning of existence is a rising upward

from the finite towards the infinite. Its life is a struggle after perfection. Its home is in the inmost chambers of the spirit, where it is apparelled by Beauty to shed radiance on the earth. Art does not merely copy nature, it coöperates with her, it interprets nature, it makes palpable her finest essence, it reveals the spiritual source of the corporeal by the perfection of its incarnations, and thus gives us reglimpses into that realm whence

“Trailing clouds of glory do we come.”

Art is mental procreation, and the mind of a people can no more grow without Art than its body can without generation. It embalms the past, it beautifies the present, it facilitates and widens the future. The Artist, therefore, whose ministry is so high, deserves to be, and is, cherished and honored as the refiner, vivifier, benefactor of his country and race. For instruction on this point, the writer of the address is referred to various passages in these letters, and to the poems of Schiller, whom he bepraises with such puerile incompetence ; and, for illustration, to the chief sources of glory and enduring influence among nations that have ascended to power and dignity. Without her Artists, her Dante, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Canova, what were Italy ? They were, and they are, the soul of her being ; they still shield from contempt her down-trodden body. The greatest man of England, Shakspeare, is the foremost Artist of the world, and it was by his “so potent

art" that he lifted his native land highest among the nations, and keeps her uplifted, as by an unrusting golden chain suspended from the vaults of Heaven. Second only to him is the German, Goethe, who by his single might raised a whole great people in the scale of civilisation :

Sage, philosopher, naturalist and bard,
Whose beautiful proportions, port serene,
Disguise more fire and strength than oft have marr'd
Less perfect natures ; who, with vision keen
And culture wide, knew best how to enguard
The brain-built structure with a thoughtful art,
And unto each the fittest form impart,

BALTIMORE, January, 1845.

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

SCHILLER AND GOETHE.

I.

RESPECTED SIR :

THE accompanying paper contains the wish of a circle, whose regard for you is unbounded, to honor the periodical work to which it relates with contributions from your hand. On the rank and value of what you may contribute, there can be among us but one voice. Your determination to give your support to this undertaking, will be decisive of its successful issue ; and with the most willing readiness we will agree to whatever conditions you may attach to your accession to our proposal.

Here in Jena, Messrs. Fichte,* Woltmann,† and Humboldt,‡ have united for the publication of this journal. And as, according to a necessary arrangement, the offered manuscripts will have to be decided upon by a smaller

* The celebrated metaphysician.

† A historian of note.

‡ Brother to the well-known traveller.

number, we shall be infinitely beholden to you if you will allow occasionally a manuscript to be laid before you for examination. The more extensive and intimate the participation with which you shall honor our undertaking, the more will its value rise in the eyes of that portion of the public whose approbation is most important to us.

With the highest respect, I remain your obedient servant and sincere admirer,

JENA, June 19, 1794.

FR. SCHILLER.

II.

You open to me a doubly agreeable prospect, through the periodical work you design to publish, and through the participation in it to which you invite me. With pleasure, and with all my heart, I will be one of the company.

If there be among my unprinted papers anything that is suitable for such a collection, I will communicate it willingly. A closer connection with such sterling men as the undertakers of this work will, I am sure, give new life to much that is now stagnant within me.

Of itself it will be a very interesting occupation, to discuss and agree upon the principles by which the submitted articles shall be tried, and so to watch over substance and form, that this periodical work shall excel all others, and preserve its superiority at least for a series of years.

I hope soon to communicate with you by word on this subject, and for the present take leave of you and your esteemed co-laborers.

WEIMAR, June 24, 1794.

GOETHE.

III.

HEREWITH you will receive back, with thanks, the Schockerian treatise ; what I understand of it I like very well, the rest he will no doubt in time explain.

At the same time I send Moritz and Diderot, and hope thereby to make my parcel useful and agreeable.

Hold me in friendly remembrance, and be assured that I enjoy a lively pleasure in the prospect of a more frequent interchange of ideas with you. Present my respects to your circle. Unexpectedly I am obliged to go to Dessau, and must postpone for some time the pleasure of seeing my Jena friends.

WEIMAR, July 25, 1794.

GOETHE.

IV.

JENA, 23d August, 1794.

I RECEIVED yesterday the agreeable news that you had returned from your journey. We may, therefore, hope to see you soon among us again, which, for myself, I heartily desire. My entire store of thought has been set in motion by my recent conversations with you ; for they related to a subject which, for several years, has busily occupied me. On much about which I could not obtain perfect harmony within myself, the contemplation of your mind* (for thus I must call the full impression of your ideas upon me) has kindled in me a new light. I needed the *object*, the body, to many speculative ideas, and you have put me on the track of it. Your observing look, which rests so calmly and clearly on all things, keeps you

* Die Anschauung Ihres Geistes.

from getting into the by-roads, into which speculation, as well as an arbitrary imagination, obeying only itself, so easily goes astray. In your correct intuition lies all that analysis laboriously seeks, and only because it lies in you as a whole, is your own wealth concealed from yourself; for, alas! we only know that which we can take to pieces. Thence, minds like yours seldom know how far they reach, and what little cause they have to learn from philosophy, which can learn only from them. Philosophy can merely dismember what is given to it; but the *giving* is not the affair of the Analyst, but of Genius, which, under the concealed, but secure, influence of pure Reason, combines according to objective laws.

For a long time I have watched, although from some distance, the procedure of your mind, and ever with renewed wonder observed the track that you have marked out for yourself. You seek for the necessary (the absolute*) in Nature; but you seek it by the most difficult route, which every weaker spirit will take care to avoid. You grasp in your view entire nature, in order to obtain light on her parts: in the totality of her manifestations you search for the key to lay open the individual. From simple organization you ascend, step by step, to the more complex, in order at last to construct out of the materials of the whole fabric of nature the most complex of all—man. By thus creating him, as it were, after nature, you seek to penetrate to the mystery of his structure. A great and really heroic idea, which shows how perfectly your mind combines in a beautiful unity the rich whole of its conceptions. You can never have hoped that your life would

* Sie suchen das Nothwendige der Natur.

suffice to complete a plan like this, but to have struck into such a path is worth more than to reach the end of any other; and you have chosen, like Achilles in the Iliad, between Pythia and Immortality. Had you been born a Greek, or even only an Italian, and had a choice Nature* and an idealising Art surrounded you from your cradle, your path would have been infinitely shortened. Then would you, on the first contemplation of things, have seized the form of the Absolute, and with your first experience would the great art of representation have developed itself in you. But, being born a German, and your Grecian spirit having been cast in this northern creation, there was left to you no other choice, but either to become a Northern Artist, or, by the help of the power of thought, to supply to your imagination that which reality withheld from it, and thus, from *within* outwardly and through a reasoning process, to create as a Greek. At that period of life when the soul, surrounded by multifarious forms, constructs from the outward world its own inward one, you had taken in a wild and northern nature. Your victorious genius, triumphing over its materials, discovered this want from within, and through acquaintance with Grecian nature, was assured of it from without. Thus were you obliged to correct (by a model which your creative genius shaped for itself), the old inferior Nature already forced upon your imagination. Now this can only be effected according to leading principles. But this *logical* direction which the spirit of Reflection is obliged to take, does not harmonize with the *æsthetic* through which only can it create. Hence, you had one

* By *Nature* is here meant the external world; all that makes impressions from without upon the inward faculties of the mind.

labor more ; for, as you first passed from Perception to Abstraction, you were obliged now to retranslate ideas into intuitions, and to change thoughts into feelings, for only through the latter can Genius produce.

Such is the judgment I have formed of the procedure of your mind, and whether or no it is just, yourself will know best. But what you will hardly be able to know (for Genius ever remains the greatest secret to itself) is, the beautiful harmony of your philosophic Instinct with the pure results of speculative Reason. At first view, it seems as if there could not be two greater opposites than the speculative spirit, which deals with oneness, and the intuitive, which deals with manifoldness. If, however, the one, with coy and clear sense, seeks experience, and the other, with self-relying active thought, the law, it cannot fail but that the two will meet half way. True, the intuitive spirit has only to do with individuals, and the speculative with species. Yet, if the intuitive is genial, and consults experience, to learn the nature of the Absolute, the individuals it produces will have the character of the species ; and if the speculative spirit is genial, and loses not sight of experience in rising above it, the species it produces will contain the possibility of individual life and be constructed with the internal reference to real objects.

But I find that, instead of a letter, I am writing an essay—pardon it, and ascribe it to the lively interest with which the subject has filled me ; and should you not in this mirror recognize your image, I beg you, do not on that account turn away from it.

The little work of Moritz, which Mr. Humboldt begs to be allowed to keep a few days longer, I have read with

much interest, and am indebted to it for some important information. It is a real enjoyment, to give oneself a clear account of an instinctive proceeding, which may so easily lead one astray, and thus to set feeling right with principles. By following out Moritz's ideas, we observe by degrees a beautiful order show itself in the anarchy of the language; and if, in so doing, we are led to discover the wants and limits of our language, we perceive its strength also, and learn how and to what purpose it may be used.

The work of Diderot, particularly the first part, is very entertaining, and, for such a subject, handled with a very edifying decency. I beg to be permitted to keep it also some days longer.

It would be well if we could get the new journal under way soon, and as you would perhaps like to open the first number of it, I take the liberty of asking you if you would not be willing to let your novel* appear in it in numbers? Whether, however, you determine to do so or not, you will do me a great favor by letting me read it. My friends and my wife beg to be kindly remembered by you, and I remain with high respect, your obedient servant,

FR. SCHILLER.

V.

For my birth-day, which falls in this week, no more agreeable present could have come to me than your letter, in which, with a friendly hand, you give the sum of my existence, and through your sympathy, encourage me to a more assiduous and active use of my powers.

Pure enjoyment and real benefit can only be reciprocal,

* Wilhelm Meister.

and it will give me pleasure to unfold to you at leisure, what my intercourse with you has done for me,—how I, too, regard it as making an epoch in my existence,—and how content I am to have gone on my way without particular encouragement, as it now appears as if we, after a so unexpected meeting, are to proceed forward together. I have always prized the honest and so rare earnestness that is visible in all that you have written and done, and I may now expect to be made acquainted by yourself with the progress of your mind, particularly in the last few years. Shall we have once made clear to each other the points to which we have thus far attained, we shall then be the better able, without interruption, to work on together.

All that relates to me, and is in me, I will gladly impart. For, as I feel very sensibly that my undertaking far exceeds the measure of the faculties of one earthly life, I would wish to depose much with you, and thereby not only give it endurance, but vitality.

Of how great profit will be to me a closer intercourse with you, yourself will soon perceive, when, on a near acquaintance, you discover in me a kind of obscurity and holding back, which I cannot entirely master, notwithstanding I am perfectly conscious of it. Like phenomena are often found in our nature, to whose government we unwillingly yield, when she is not too tyrannical.

I hope soon to pass some time with you, and then we will talk over much together.

Unluckily I had sent my novel to Unger* a few weeks before your invitation, and the first printed sheets are al-

* A bookseller.

ready in my hands. More than once the thought has occurred to me lately that it would have been very suitable for the Journal. It is the only thing that I now have which has bulk, and is a kind of problematical composition such as our good Germans like.

I will send you the first Book as soon as the proof-sheets are together. The work has been so long written, that in the strictest sense I am only the publisher.

For the rest, if there be among my projects anything that would serve the purpose you mention, we could easily agree about the most fitting form to put it in, and there should be no delay about the execution.

Farewell, and remember me in your circle.

ETTERSBURO, 27th August, 1794.

GOETHE.

VI.

THE accompanying sheets I could only send to a friend from whom I can hope that he will meet me half way. In reading them over again, I seem to myself like the boy who undertook to drain the ocean with the hollow of his hand. I will take the liberty of sending you hereafter other such impromptus. They will excite, enliven, and give a direction to our conversation. Farewell,

WEIMAR, 30th August, 1794.

GOETHE.

VII.

JENA, 31st August, 1794.

ON my return from Weissenfels, whither I had been to meet my friend Körner, from Dresden, I received your letter of the 27th, the contents of which were doubly agreeable to me; for I perceive from it that in the view I took

of your being I met your own feelings, and that the candor with which I spoke what I felt did not displease you. Our acquaintance so long deferred, but which now awakens in me so many delightful hopes, is to me another proof how much better it often is to let chance have its own way, than to forestall it by too much officiousness. However strong my desire has always been to enter into a closer relation with you, than is possible between the spirit of a writer and his most attentive reader, yet now I perceive clearly, that the very different paths in which you and I moved, could not have brought us together with advantage sooner than just at this time. But now, I can hope that we shall travel together the rest of our way, and with the greater profit, inasmuch as the last travellers who join company on a long journey, have always the most to say to one another.

Do not look for any great store of ideas in me : this is what I shall find in you. My need and endeavor is, to make much out of little ; and when, on a closer acquaintance, you shall discover my poverty in all that is called acquired knowledge, you will perhaps find that I have sometimes been successful in doing it. Because my circle of ideas is small, I can the more rapidly and oftener run through it, and on that very account use my little store with more effect, and produce through outward form the variety which is wanting in materials. You strive to simplify your great world of ideas ; I seek variety for my little possessions. You have a kingdom to govern : I only a tolerably numerous family of ideas which I would very gladly enlarge to a little world.

The working of your mind is intuitive in an extraordinary degree, and all your thinking powers seem to have,

as it were, agreed to refer to your imagination as their common representative. At bottom, this is the highest that a man can do for himself, if he can succeed in generalizing through his perceptions and in reaching principles through his feelings. To do this is your endeavor, and to what a degree have you already attained this end! My understanding works more symbolically, and thus I float, like one with two natures, between ideas and perceptions, between the technical head and Genius. This it is which, particularly in my early years, gave me sometimes an awkward appearance, as well in the field of speculation as in poetry; for commonly the Poet overtook me when I ought to have philosophized, and the philosophic spirit, when I wished to be poetical. Even now, it often happens to me, that imagination intrudes upon my abstractions, and cold understanding upon my poetical moods. If I can obtain such mastery over these two powers, as to be able in my freedom to assign to each its limits, there is yet in store for me a beautiful lot; but, alas! just as I have begun properly to know and use my moral powers, a disease threatens to undermine my physical. I can scarcely hope to have time to complete a great and general mental revolution in myself, but I will do what I can; and when at last the building falls, I shall, perhaps, still have snatched from the ruin what is worthy to be preserved.

You wished that I should speak of myself, and I have made use of the permission. With frankness I entrust to you these confessions, and may hope that you will receive them with cordiality.

I abstain to-day from going into the details of your view, which at once gives to our communications on this subject the most profitable direction. My own researches,

entered upon by a different route, have led me to a result very similar to that at which you have arrived, and in the accompanying papers you will perhaps find ideas which coincide with yours. They were written down about a year and a half ago, and as well on this account as from the particular occasion of them (for they were intended for an indulgent friend) may claim indulgence for the roughness of their form. Since then they have received in me a better foundation and a greater precision, which will entitle them to approach much nearer to yours.

That Wilhelm Meister is lost to our Journal, I cannot sufficiently regret. Meanwhile I expect from your fertile resources and your friendly zeal for our undertaking an equivalent for this loss, whereby then the friends of your genius will gain doubly. In the number of the *Thalia*, which I send herewith, you will find some ideas of Körner on Declamation, which you will like. All with us request your friendly remembrance, and I am with the warmest regard, yours,

SCHILLER.

VIII.

- THE manuscripts you sent me, as well as the fragment on the Sublime, I have read with much pleasure, and am thereby more than ever convinced, that not only do the same subjects interest us, but that for the most part we agree in the manner of viewing them. I see that on all leading points we are of one mind ; and as to differences in the mode of combining and in expression, why these grow out of the richness of the object and the corresponding manifoldness in the subjects.* I will now request you

* *Object* and *Subject* refer mostly, in German criticism, the former to the matter treated of, the latter to the person treating it.

to furnish me with all that you have written on this subject, in order that without loss of time we may bring up the past.

And here I have a proposal to make to you. Next week the Court goes to Eisenach, and for a fortnight I shall be alone and independent, as I have not a prospect of being soon again. Will you not, during this period, visit me, and lodge with me? You would be able to occupy yourself in quiet with any kind of work. At convenient hours we should talk together, see such friends as were the most congenial to us, and would part not without profit. You should live entirely after your own fashion, and be as much as possible as if you were in your own house. In this way I should be enabled to show you what is most valuable in my literary store, and many threads of connection would be joined between us. After the fourteenth you will find me free and ready to receive you.

Until then I will reserve much that I have to say, and in the mean time wish you all happiness.

Have you seen *Charis*, by Ramdohr? With all the natural and artificial organs of my individual being I have sought to lay hold of the book, but as yet have not found a single page that I could get possession of.

Farewell, and greet your friends from me,

WEIMAR, 4th September, 1794.

GOETHE.

IX.

JENA, 7th September, 1794.

WITH pleasure I accept your kind invitation, but with the earnest request, that in no particular of your household arrangements will you make any change with reference to me: for, alas! my spasms oblige me commonly to devote

the whole morning to sleep, because they let me have no rest at night, and, indeed, I am never well enough to be able in a whole day to count upon a fixed hour. I must, therefore, beg, that I may be in your house as one who is not to be cared for, so that by being thus left to myself, I may escape the embarrassment of making any one else dependant upon my state of health. The arrangement which would make any other man comfortable, is my worst enemy, for the being obliged to do a certain thing at a particular time is sure to render me unfit to do it.

Pardon these preliminaries, which I must first settle, in order to make my staying with you even possible. I will request the poor liberty of being permitted to be an invalid in your house.

I was just about to propose to you to pay me a visit when I received your invitation. My wife has gone with our child to spend three weeks at Rudolstadt, to avoid the small pox with which Mr. Humboldt has had his children inoculated. I am quite alone, and could lodge you very comfortably. Except Humboldt, I seldom see any one, and for a long time no metaphysics have crossed my threshold.

My proceeding in regard to Ramdohr's *Charis* was singular. On my first looking through it, I was repelled by his strange style and horrible philosophy, and I sent him heels over head back to the bookseller. A short time afterwards on reading some passages of his book on the Netherland schools, extracted in a scientific journal, I took to him more kindly, and read his *Charis* again, and not without profit. His general views on sensibility, taste, and beauty, are most unsatisfactory; but the practical portion of his book, where he speaks of the characteristics

of the different arts and assigns to each its sphere and boundaries, I have found very useful. You see here that he is in his element, and that from having lived long in the midst of works of Art, he has acquired a more than common skill in judging of them. In this department speaks the man of information, who, if he has not a paramount voice, has, at least, a concurrent one. But here he cannot have for you the value he necessarily has for me, because you already possess the experience upon which his merit rests, and you therefore find nothing new in him. In that which you seek he is particularly faulty, and that wherein he is successful you do not need. I shall be surprised if the Kantians let him pass quietly, and if the opponents of this philosophy do not endeavor to strengthen their side through him.

As you have read the fragment on the Sublime, I herewith send you the beginning, in which you will perhaps find a few ideas that decide something as to the æsthetic expression of passion. Several earlier essays by me on æsthetic subjects are not sufficiently satisfactory to myself for me to lay them before you, and some later ones that are yet unprinted I will bring with me. Perhaps you would like to see a review by me of Matthison's Poems in the *General Literary Gazette*, which will be published this week. On account of the anarchy which still continues in poetical criticism, and the entire absence of objective laws of taste, the critic always finds himself embarrassed, when he wishes to support his assertions with reasons; for there are no established laws to which he can appeal. If he wishes to deal fairly, he must either be silent altogether, or he must (and that is not always agreeable) be both legislator and judge. In this review I have adopted the

latter course, and with what right or success, I should prefer to hear from you.

I have this moment received the review and send it.

FR. SCHILLER.

X.

TAKE my thanks for your consent to come. You will have perfect liberty to live after your own manner. Be good enough to advise me of the day you will come, so that I may be prepared for you.

Perhaps Mr. Humboldt will pay us a visit: perhaps I shall return with you. But all this we will leave to the genius of the day. If you have Charis, bring it with you.

Some beautiful landscapes, that have just arrived from Naples, will aid us in our conversations on this subject.

Farewell, and commend me to your friends.

WEIMAR, September 10, 1794.

GOETHE.

I have just received some copies of the English *Iphigenia*,* and send you one.

XI.

JENA, 12th September, 1794.

You have left it to me to fix a day after the 14th. With your permission then, I shall be with you on Sunday afternoon, as I wish to lose as little as possible of the pleasure you have in store for me. Mr. Humboldt, who is much gratified by your invitation, will accompany me, in order to spend some hours with you.

* One of Goethe's dramas.

Ramdohr was here a few days ago, and probably called on you too. He tells me that he is now writing a book on Love, in which he will prove that pure love never has existed anywhere but among the Greeks. He goes pretty deep for his ideas on Beauty, for he calls to his aid the sexual feeling.

The English Iphigenia gave me much pleasure. As far as I can judge, this foreign dress fits it very well, and one is forcibly reminded of the affinity between the two languages.

Frederick Jacobi joins us in the *Horen*,* which will be a very acceptable enlargement of our circle. He is to me a very interesting man, although I must acknowledge that I don't take to his works.

Charis cannot be procured here anywhere, but I will bring with me a treatise of Maimon on the Beautiful, which is worth reading.

My wife charges me with many friendly assurances for you. I am about to send her the English Iphigenia, which will give her much pleasure.

SCHILLER.

XII.

JENA, 29th September, 1794.

I AM back here again, but my mind is still in Weimar. It will take me some time to unfold all the ideas which you have set in motion in me ; but no one of them I hope will be lost. It was my purpose to devote these last fourteen days to the imbibing of as much from you as my receptivity would permit : time will now show, whether this seed will come up in me.

* The Journal about to be established.

On my return, I found a letter from our publisher, who is full of zeal and resoluteness to begin the great work soon. I had purposely represented to him once more all the difficulties and all the possible dangers of this undertaking, in order to give him the opportunity of taking the step with the greatest deliberation. But after weighing all circumstances, he thinks that no undertaking could be more promising: and he has made a precise estimate of his resources. We can count upon his untiring activity in circulating the Journal, as well as on his punctuality in paying.

He expresses the wish, that in our committee we would give a consulting voice to his partner, a young man of education. I cannot take it amiss of him that he desires to have a good friend in the body which is to have a hold on his purse-strings. In addition to this, the young man, whose name is Zahn, belongs to the Commercial Company at Calv. I think, therefore, that we shall do well to interest him as much as possible in our undertaking, and that he may be allowed a consulting voice in our committee. As this is an affair that belongs to our official acts, I request that you will sign the enclosed paper, if you approve of its contents.

As I wish to write to Mr. Arends in a few days, I beg you to be good enough to give me his address. You spoke recently of engaging Mr. Hirt, in Rome, to keep you informed of what is doing in the Arts in Italy. This would certainly be very useful, and I hope you will not omit it.

The air is so oppressive to-day, that I am obliged to limit myself to editorial matters. I learn that Ramdohr has complained here of your reception of him in Dresden.

He is here so esteemed as a connoisseur, that K. took him to the joiner's to have the benefit of his judgment about a very common bureau he is having made.

SCHILLER.

XIII.

THAT the editors of the *Horen* receive Mr. Zahn of Tübingen, into their association, and allow him a consultative voice in the affairs which regard this monthly journal, seems to me perfectly suitable to the circumstances. It is to be understood, that this connection lasts only so long as Mr. Cotta is the publisher.

WEIMAR, 1st October, 1794.

GOETHE.

XIV.

WE know now, my excellent friend, from our fortnight's conference, that as to principles we agree, and that the circles of our feelings, thoughts, and activity, partly coincide, partly touch; from this, much good will follow to both. For the *Horen*, I have continued to think, and begun to work; I am planning vehicles and masks, through which and under which we may administer a variety of things to the public. I have no objection to make against the admission of Mr. Zahn; but as I would wish that you alone sign all documents, I give my assent on a separate sheet.

Farewell, and do not entirely forget my dietetic advice. I hope soon to be able to send you something, and expect that you will suggest to me subjects to write about.

WEIMAR, 1st October, 1794.

GOETHE.

Mr. Arends will not fail to get your letter if you put *architect* in the address : he is well known in Hamburg.

I shall not forget Hirt and Albrecht. Thank Mr. Humboldt for the review of Woldemar ; I have just been reading it with the greatest interest.

XV.

As *Venice Preserved* will not be played next Saturday, and not till Tuesday, and is not either of importance enough to bring you hither, I propose to you, that you and your dear wife come over on Saturday the 18th, when we shall give Don Carlos. Although you would not be much edified by the representation, it would be an excellent opportunity for testing the talents of our actors for the object we spoke of. Farewell, and think of me.

WEIMAR, 8th October, 1794.

GOETHE.

XVI.

JENA, 8th October, 1794.

FORGIVE the long delay of this letter, which is the opening of our correspondence.* Several pieces of urgent business for the Literary Gazette and the Thalia, have obliged me to defer it, against my wish and will.

It will now depend on you, whether the path into which I here strike, shall be pursued further. As, in the sequel, reference will probably be so often made to this point, I

* From this passage, and a similar one in the next letter of Goethe, it appears that this letter contained another in the form of an essay on the Beautiful, to which Goethe replied. These letters are not published in their Correspondence.

have thought it necessary that at the outset we should distinctly unfold our ideas on the nature of the Beautiful.

* * * * *

I am very anxious to see your novel which you were to have given me. Schutz has proposed to me to review this part of it, and I am well inclined to gratify him, particularly as I do not wish to see it go into other hands.

The Humboldts and my wife send you friendly greetings, and I am near to you through all by which I feel and think.

SCHILLER.

XVII.

You would probably not have been dissatisfied with the representation of Don Carlos, if we had had the pleasure of seeing you here. Do not let the Knights of Malta* out of your mind.

At the end of this week I shall send you the Elegies; they are partly copied, only some refractory lines here and there detain me.

You will also receive some sheets in answer to your first letter: I have written them already, but must rewrite some parts. It seems to me quite strange to find myself theorizing.

Remember me in your circle. Be kind enough to give a quarter of an hour to Mr. Gerning who will be the bearer of this.

WEIMAR, 16th October, 1794.

GOETHE.

* A drama that Schiller was planning.

XVIII.

JENA, 17th October, 1794.

IF not prevented by my health, which the bad weather has again deranged, I will go over to-morrow, with my wife, to Weimar. But do not expect me with certainty.

I am now putting the last hand to my letters to the *Pr. of Aug.*, because I design the beginning of them for the first number of the *Horen*. I hope to be able to send them to you next Tuesday. My first work will then be to continue the subject we have lately taken in hand. We are looking forward to the arrival of the *Elegies* and the *Epistle* with great eagerness.

All here greet you kindly.

SCHILLER.

XIX.

JENA, 20th October, 1794.

HERE then I make the dance of the *Horen* begin, and send you the portion of my letter to the *Pr.* that is intended for the first number. Doubtless your and my contributions will fill the whole number, all to a few sheets. Perhaps we can get from Herder a short piece for the first number: this I should be much pleased at. For the rest, although there is no variety of authors, there is variety of matter in the first number, as you will perceive.

My debut in the *Horen* is at least no attempt to win the public by flattering. I could not, however, handle it more gently, and I am sure that in this particular you will be of my mind. I hope that you may be so too in the others, for I must acknowledge, that my real, earnest opinion, is expressed in these letters. I have never before written a line about political bemoanings, and I have

said what I have in these letters, merely that I may never hereafter say anything more of them ; but I believe that the confession I make therein is not entirely superfluous. Different as are the instruments with which you and I take hold of the world, and different as are the offensive and defensive weapons that we carry, I yet think that we aim at one and the same point. You will find in these letters a portrait of yourself, under which I should have liked to write your name, if I did not hate to forestall the feelings of thinking readers. None, whose judgment can be of value to you, will mistake it, for I know that I have seized it well and drawn it faithfully.

I should like, if you have time, that you read the manuscript soon, and then send it to Herder, whom I will advise thereof ; for, according to our rules, it must pass through several hands before it can be despatched, and we wish soon to make arrangements for the printing of the *Horen*.

In regard to the Almanac of the Muses, of which I lately spoke to you in W., I have made a formal contract with the Jew bookseller, and it will appear next Michaelmas. On your goodness, which will not leave me in the lurch, I count much in this. In a business point of view, this undertaking will be a trifling increase of load, but for my pecuniary aims on that very account the happier, because I can continue it in weak health, and thereby secure my independence.

With much impatience I anticipate what your last letter promises me. We all beg to be remembered by you.

SCHILLER.

XX.

WITH great pleasure, I have read the manuscript you sent me: I took it in at one draught. As a delicious drink, suitable to our nature, slips down the throat gratefully, and at once, while only on the tongue, gives evidence of its wholesome operation by the fine tone it imparts to the nervous system, thus were these letters agreeable and salutary to me. And how could it be otherwise, when I found that which I for a long time have thought true, what I either praised or wished to praise, set forth in so clear and noble a manner. Meyer, too, is delighted with it; and his keen impartial perception was a strong confirmation to me. This agreeable mood was near being ruffled by the accompanying note from Herder, who would impute onesidedness to us who enjoy this mode of exposition. But as one must not be too exacting in regard to this world's phenomena, and as there is ever a consolation when one errs in the company of tried men, while laboring for the profit and not the injury of oneself and one's contemporaries, let us cheerfully and undiverted thus continue to live and labor, and figure to ourselves our being and aims as a whole, that we may give as nearly as possible completeness to our patchwork. The letters I will retain for a few days, in order to enjoy with Meyer the pleasure of reading them again.

Here are the Elegies. I wish you not to let them out of your hands, but read them to those who have to judge of their admissibility. After which I beg to have them back to revise and perhaps retouch. If you find anything to remark upon, pray point it out.

The Epistle is nearly copied, and will follow soon, with several trifles; then I must make a stop, for the third

book of the Novel requires my attention. I have not yet the proof-sheets of the first; as soon as they arrive, you shall have them.

As to the Almanac,* I will propose to you to insert in, or add to it, a little book of Epigrams. Singly they have no value; but we could, out of some hundreds (many of which are not presentable), select a number which have a bearing one on the other, and form a whole. You shall see the sportive brood all together, in their nest, the next time we meet.

Farewell, and remember me in your circle.

WEIMAR, 26th October, 1794.

GOETHE.

Write me what you wish from me next for the *Horen*, and when you want it. The second epistle will be written in the first favorable mood.

XXI.

JENA, 28th October, 1794.

THAT you agree with me in my ideas, and are satisfied with the manner of setting them forth, delights me not a little, and on the route I have entered will serve me as most needful encouragement. True, things that are expounded by pure reason, or at any rate profess to be so, stand firmly enough on internal and objective grounds, and carry within themselves the criterion of truth; but as yet there is no such philosophy, and mine is far distant from it. After all, the matter rests at last principally on the testimony of individual assertion, and needs therefore a subjective sanction, which only the concurrence of unprejudiced minds can bestow. Meyer's opinion is here

* The German annuals are so called.

significant and invaluable to me, and consoles me for the opposition of Herder, who it seems can never forgive me my Kantian belief. Nor do I expect from the opponents of the new Philosophy the toleration that is commonly extended to any system of which no better opinion is entertained; for the Kantian Philosophy itself exercises none in material points, and has by far too stern a character, for any compromise with it to be possible. But this does it honor in my eyes, for it shows that it will not permit arbitrary hypothesis. Nor, therefore, is such a philosophy to be dismissed with a shaking of the head. In the open, clear, accessible field of inquiry, it builds up its system, never seeks the shade, and makes no reservation of private feeling; but, as it treats its neighbors, will it be treated by them, and is to be pardoned if it respects nothing but arguments. I am not at all alarmed by thinking, that the law of change, before which no human nor divine work finds favor, will overthrow the form of this Philosophy as well as every other: but this fate its foundations will not have to fear; for, since the human race was, it has been silently acknowledged and in the general conformed to, and this will continue so long as there is reason.

With the philosophy of our friend Fichte, the case is quite different. Already are sturdy opponents stirring in his own community, who will shortly proclaim that it all resolves itself into a subjective Spinozism. He has induced one of his old academic friends, one Weissshuhn, to remove hither, probably with the design of extending through him his own empire. Weissshuhn, however, who, from all I hear of him, has a capital philosophic head, thinks that he has already made a hole in his system, and

will write against him. According to oral utterances of Fichte, for nothing has been said of this yet in his book, the *I* is creative also through its ideas, and all reality is only in the *I*. To him, the world is only a ball which the *I* has thrown forth, and which it again catches in the act of reflexion!! Thus 'tis said he has really declared his godhead, as we lately expected.

We are all very thankful to you for the Elegies. There is in them a warmth, a tenderness, and a hearty, genuine poetic spirit that does one good amidst the productions of the present poetic world. They are a spiritual manifestation of the true poetic genius. Several little traits I have been disappointed in not finding, but I understand how you were obliged to sacrifice. I am in doubt about a few passages, which I will mark when I send them back.

As you call on me to say what more I desire from you for the first numbers, I will remind you of your idea to work up the story of the honest advocate from Boccaccio. I prefer at all times representation to investigation, and here the more, because in the three first numbers of the *Horen* we are obliged to philosophize somewhat too much, and there is a deficiency in poetic pieces. Were it not for this, I would call to your mind the treatise on landscape painting. According to the present arrangements, it will be necessary to despatch the third number of the *Horen* by the beginning of January. If now, your elegies and the first epistle appear in the first number, the second epistle and what else you may send this week, in the second, and in the third another epistle and your story from Boccaccio, each of these numbers will be sure of its value.

Your kind offer respecting the epigrams is most advantageous for the Almanac. We will confer about the arrangement of them. Perhaps it may be possible to make several sets of them, each set to be independent of the others.

I rejoice to hear that Professor Meyer is again in Weimar, and I beg that you will make us acquainted very soon. Perhaps he will consent to make an excursion hither, and, in order that this may not be entirely fruitless for the artist, I have a bust by a German sculptor to show him, which, I think I may venture to say, need not fear the eye of the genuine connoisseur. Perhaps he will consent to furnish something this winter for the *Horen*.

I shall certainly set to work at the Maltese Knights, as soon as I shall have finished a little essay on the Naive, and my Letters, of which you have only read the third part: but this will take up the rest of the present year. For the birthday of the Duchess I cannot therefore promise it, but think that I shall have it ready by the end of the winter. I speak now as if I were a healthy active man.

Keep us in your friendly remembrance: you live in ours.

SCHILLER.

XXII.

HEREWITH I send you back your Letters with thanks. Having read them first as a contemplative man, and therein found much, I may almost say perfect harmony with my own mode of thinking, I read them a second time with a practical view, and observed narrowly, whether I discovered anything that might mislead me as an active

man ; but there also I found myself only strengthened and forwarded : let us therefore with frank confidence rejoice in this harmony.

Here you have my first epistle, with some trifles. I am at work on the second. The tale shall be ready by the end of the year, and I hope a third epistle.

The accompanying letter from Maimon, with the treatise, will interest you. Don't let it go out of your hands. Perhaps I shall visit you soon with Meyer. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 28th October, 1794.

GOETHE.

XXIII.

To-morrow, by ten o'clock, I hope to arrive at Jena with Meyer, and to pass some pleasant days in your neighborhood. I hope I shall find you well.

WEIMAR, 1st November, 1794.

GOETHE.

XXIV.

JENA, 16th November, 1794.

THE unfriendly weather, which shuts up all organs of sensation, has, during the past week, unfitted me for all that can be called life, and as I come to myself out of this mental slumber, I feel as if I had to find you again after a long interval. I long for some friendly trace of you. In order that there may be something with you that shall occasionally make me present to you, I beg you to grant the accompanying portraits place in your house, any one you choose, except that in which you have buried the — portrait.

As you request, I send back the *Elegies* together with the *Stolbergs*, with my best thanks. The first manuscript

of the *Horen* went off the day before yesterday to the bookseller. I have written to him that he may expect the remainder of the first number in a fortnight.

The comedy, *The Widow*, which you recently took with you, I beg you to send back for a fortnight. It is to be printed in the *Thalia*, with which it will be returned to you, if you desire to make use of it.

I have anxiously expected a manuscript from Meyer this week. Will you recall me to his memory.

Mr. Humboldt will commence his journey to Frankfort next Saturday.

SCHILLER.

XXV.

I SEND you the manuscript, and hope that I have hit the right quantity and the proper tone. Pray return it to me soon, because some corrections are necessary here and there in order to give certain passages more light. If I can get the second epistle and the first tale ready for the second number, we will let them come next, and reserve the Elegies for the third; if not, these must go first. I take great pleasure in these short tales, after such a burden as a *pseudo-epic* like the *Novel** lays on one.

Unger sends me the end of the first Book, and forgets the middle. As soon as the missing six sheets arrive, I will send this Prologue.

Mr. Humboldt came lately to one of our æsthetic-critical meetings: I don't know how he liked it.

I am anxious to hear how you are getting on with your labors: still more to read something you have completed.

* Wilhelm Meister.

Of course you receive the proof-sheets of the Monthly Journal,* in order that we may have a sight of its physiognomy sooner than the public.

Farewell. I have a mass of things I should like to talk over with you.

WEIMAR, November 27th, 1794.

GOETHE.

XXVI.

JENA, 29th November, 1794.

You have surprised me most agreeably with the unexpected quickness with which you have furnished the Introduction to your tales, and I am doubly thankful to you for it. According to my judgment, the whole is most properly introduced, and particularly is the contested point very happily cleared up. Only it is a pity that the reader at first sight sees so little, and thence is not in a situation to form a judgment of the bearing of what is said upon the whole. It would, therefore, have been desirable that the first tale could have been given along with the introduction. But I would not like to be unreasonable in my wishes, and cause you to regard your participation in the journal as a burden. I therefore suppress this wish, and merely assure you, that if you can gratify it without inconvenience to yourself, you will confer on me a great favor.

According to the estimate I have made (and I have counted several pages by the words), the manuscript cannot make more than two sheets and a half, so that there will still be left one sheet to be filled up. If it cannot be done in any other way, I will myself provide for this seventh sheet, and briefly give out of the History of the

* The *Horen*.

Netherlands a piece that by itself is interesting, viz. : the siege of Antwerp under Philip II., in which there is much that is remarkable. It will cost me little trouble, and this end will thereby be gained, that in this, the very first number, the historical field will be entered. Of course, this expedient will be abandoned the moment there is hope of getting a tale from you. That the appearance of the first number is delayed a week cannot be avoided. This, however, is not so great an evil, and, perhaps, we shall be able to make up for it by issuing the second number within a week after it.

As in my address to the public, I shall make profession of modesty in judging of political matters, I suggest for your consideration, whether a party of the public, and not the least numerous, might not take offence at what you put in the mouth of the privy counsellor? Although it is not the author who speaks, but an interlocutor, still the weight is on his side, and we have to be more guarded against what *seems* than what *is*.

* * * * *

The proof-sheets of the *Horen* will be sent weekly ; I doubt whether we may expect the first for a fortnight.

The foolish mistake of Unger is very vexatious, for I am waiting for this work with a real longing. But with not less eagerness would I read those fragments of your Faust that are not yet printed ; for I tell you frankly, that to me what I have read of them was the Torso of Hercules. In these scenes, there reign a power and a fulness of genius, which reveal the first master—and I should like to accompany, as far as possible, the great and bold spirit that breathes in them.

Mr. Humboldt, who sends his best regards to you, is

still full of the impression which your manner of expounding Homer made upon him, and has excited in us all such a curiosity about it, that the first time you come over, we shall not let you rest until you hold a similar sitting with us.

With my æsthetic letters I get on slowly, but the subject makes this necessary, and I console myself with thinking that the edifice will have a good foundation. If the little historical labor did not intervene, I could perhaps send you another parcel in eight or ten days.

All with us recommend themselves to your friendly remembrance.

SCHILLER.

XXVII.

I AM very glad that you are in the general not dissatisfied with my Introduction. I will go through it again and attend to your suggestions. Your historical piece will doubtless be serviceable to the number, which will thereby gain in desirable variety. In the second number I hope to get the tale ; but I design to follow the example of the narrator in the thousand and one nights. I rejoice in having the benefit of your remarks as I proceed, and thereby to give new life to this performance. The same advantage I hope for the novel. Let me not wait long for the continuation of your letters.

I cannot now send you anything of Faust ; I cannot venture to untie the package in which he is bound up. I could not copy without working to finish it, and that I do not feel in a mood for. If anything can make me do it hereafter, it will certainly be your sympathy and co-operation.

That Mr. Humboldt liked our Homeric discussion is very satisfactory to me, for I undertook it with some anxiety. A pleasure enjoyed in common with others has great charms ; but it is so often marred by diversity among the partakers. Thus far a good genius has ever watched over our hours. Suppose we read some books together : this would afford us a rich enjoyment.

Farewell, and let me not be far from you and yours.

WEIMAR, 2d December, 1794.

GOETHE.

XXXI.*

AT last here is the first book of Wilhelm Meister. Unfortunately you will only see the first two books after the mould has given them a fixed form : nevertheless, give me your opinion frankly—tell me what is wished and expected. The following books you will see while yet in the pliant manuscript, and you will not withhold from me your friendly counsel.

* * * * *

Cotta is probably right in wishing to put the names to the articles in the Journal ; he knows the public, which looks more to the stamp than the substance. I therefore leave it entirely to the other co-laborers to determine respecting their contributions ; but as to mine, I must request that they all appear anonymously. Only in this way, consistently with my other relations, can I take part in your journal with freedom and spirit.

If you find misprints or anything else to remark upon in the novel, have the goodness to mark them with a pencil.

* The intervening letters from twenty-seven to thirty-one, relate to the contents of the Journal and arrangements with the publisher.

I am glad that I shall soon have something more from you to read, and hope, after New Year, to see you again for a short time.

Meyer greets you, and I beg to be remembered by you.

WEIMAR, 6th December, 1794.

G.

XXXII.

JENA, 9th December, 1794.

WITH hearty delight have I read and devoured the first book of Wilhelm Meister, and owe to it an enjoyment such as I have not had for a long time, and never but through you. I should really be vexed if I could ascribe the mistrust with which you speak of this admirable product of your genius, to any other cause than the vastness of the requisitions which your mind will always make of itself. For I find in it nothing that does not harmonize perfectly with the beautiful whole. Do not expect to-day a more detailed opinion from me. The journal and its announcement, together with to-day being post-day, distract me too much to permit me to gather up my mind for such a purpose. If I may keep the sheets here some days longer, I will take more time to it, and try if I can divine something of the course of the story and the development of the characters. Mr. Humboldt has had a high pleasure in it, and like me, finds your genius in all its vigorous youth, calm power, and creative fullness. No doubt this impression will be general. The connexion between its parts is so simple and beautiful, and so much is effected with little. I acknowledge I at first feared, that on account of the long interval that must have elapsed between the first writing of it and the giving to it the last finish, a little inequality

might be visible. But of this there is no trace. The bold poetic passages which flash up from the calm current of the whole, have an excellent effect ; they elevate and fill the soul. Of the beautiful delineation of character I will to-day say nothing ; nor of the living graphic naturalness of all the descriptions, and which, however, cannot be denied to any of your productions. Of the truth of the picture of a theatrical economy and theatrical tone, I am very competent to judge, being better acquainted with both than I have cause to desire. The apology for commerce is noble and in a grand spirit. But that by the side of this you could still maintain with a kind of triumph the disposition (to poetry) of the hero, is certainly not the least of the victories which form gains over substance. But I must not go deeper into the subject, as I could not just now do justice to it.

I have put an interdict upon Cotta in regard to the names of all of us : the advertisement I have to my great relief finished to-day, and it is to be appended to the Intelligence sheet of the Literary Gazette. Your promise to come over here after Christmas, gives me much comfort, and makes me look towards my enemy, the winter, with somewhat of cheerfulness.

I have not yet been able to learn anything of the story relating to Mademoiselle Clairon. My wife recollects to have heard that in Bayreuth, on the opening of an old building, the old Margraves appeared and prophesied. X., who generally knows something *de rebus omnibus et quibusdam aliis*, could give me no information about it.

All here commend themselves to you and rejoice at your promised visit.

SCHILLER.

XXXIII.

You have given me much pleasure by your testimony in favor of the first book of my novel. After the singular fate this work has had, it would be not at all wonderful if my head had got confused in regard to it. I shall adhere strictly to my plan, and shall rejoice if it conducts me out of this labyrinth.

Keep the first book as long as you please: the second you will receive soon, and you will read the third in manuscript. Thus you will have more points of view from which to form a judgment. I hope that your enjoyment may not diminish, but increase with the next books. As I have now your voice and that of Mr. Humboldt, I will work on the more assiduously.

The withholding of the names, which should certainly be mentioned in the advertisement, will add to the interest of the Journal: only the articles must be good.

In regard to the Clairon story I am now satisfied, and would rather that nothing more be said of it until we produce it.

Farewell. I hope that I shall have the pleasure of beginning the new year with you.

WEIMAR, 10th December, 1794.

G.

XXXIV.

JENA, 22d December, 1794.

HERE at last you have a sight of the *Horen*, which I hope may please you. The print is somewhat close, whereby the public gains more than we do. But hereafter we shall be able to change that, particularly in the poetic pieces, and spread ourselves over a larger surface. At

first starting I do not dislike that the long articles apparently go together. I shall also provide that Cotta in some way remunerate those of us who contribute much, and to whom, therefore, the closeness of the print is a matter of some importance.

I hope that you will find no misprints: I at least have found none. The type and form of the book give to it a solid and durable look, and distinguish it advantageously from the mass of journals. The paper is stout, and seems to be prepared to last long.

Cotta is urgent for manuscript for the second number; I therefore call on you for the second Epistle.

I beg you will send me back those sheets, because *Schütz*, who is now going to review the first number, wishes to see it, sheet by sheet. I have also requested a proof of the cover, and shall receive it in eight days. Heartily do I rejoice at your promised visit. Madame de Kalb has been here some days.

SCHILLER.

XXXV.

THE sheets will be sent back immediately. Both paper and print look well, particularly the prose. Through the mixture of single and double lines the Hexameters lose rhythm to the eye.

Here is the second Epistle. You shall have the third in time to open the third number with it.

I will now set to work at the Ghost-story. I shall get through a good deal before the end of the year, in order to be able to greet you with the more satisfaction in the new.

Make Cotta send back the manuscripts : this is advisable on several accounts.

Farewell, and greet for me Madame de K., who unfortunately passed by me this time at a distance.

WEIMAR, 23d December, 1794.

G.

XXXVI.

ON account of old Obereit, I write you a few words to-day. He seems to be in great want ; I have twenty rix dollars for him, which I will send you on Saturday. Will you in the meanwhile advance him something ? and keep what I shall send, and give it to him part at a time, for he will never learn how to handle this tool. Farewell ; my third book is ready, and everything seems to promise that I shall be in fine spirits when I see you after New Year.

WEIMAR, 25th December, 1794.

G.

XXXVII.

JENA, 2d January, 1795.

My best wishes for the New Year, and hearty thanks to you for the past, which, through your friendship, is notable and memorable to me above all others.

I have closed it in much diligence, and, in order to have something finished when you come, have taxed myself stoutly during the last few days. I have just got to the end of my work, and it can be laid before you when you come.

The epistle, for which I thank you, is still in my hands ; for, as the piece which is to come immediately after it was not ready, it was useless to send it. There is the

less urgency, too, because more manuscript was required for the first number, as the treatise of Fichte did not suffice, and thence the appearance of this number is delayed a fortnight.

Professor Meyer will pardon me that I have sent off a part of his treatise without his permission. It was not possible to submit it to him again after my revision, because I was obliged to despatch it on the same day. I think, however, that I can safely assure him, that he will have no cause of dissatisfaction, because the changes I made related exclusively to the outward form. This treatise has given me great pleasure, and will be most valuable matter for the *Horen*. It is so rare that a man like Meyer has the opportunity to study art in Italy, or that one who has this opportunity turns out to be a Meyer.

I have never read the Klopstock ode of which you write, and if it can be obtained, do bring it with you. The title leads one to expect a production such as it is.

I rejoice exceedingly to hear of the continuation of Meister, which I hope you will also bring with you, and I am just now in a state to enjoy it highly.

I wish that you could besides let us hear some scenes from Faust. Madame de Kalb, who knew something of it, has lately wrought up my curiosity about it, and I don't know that anything in the whole poetic world could give me more pleasure.

Your commission respecting Obereit shall be attended to. For the present he has enough to live on, having received some money from Meiningen. A part of the four louis-d'ors will have to be laid out in clothing for him, particularly as thereby he will be enabled to frequent the tables of his friends, from which hitherto his philosophic cynicism has excluded him.

I hope in a few days either to see you or to learn on what day you will come. All here beg to be remembered by you.

SCH.

XXXVIII.

MUCH happiness for the New Year! Let us spend this one as we concluded the last—in reciprocal participation in what we love and work at. If those of the same mind don't cling to one another, what is to become of society and sociability! I rejoice in the hope that co-operation and confidence will ever increase between us. Here is the first volume of the Novel. The second copy is for Humboldt. May the second book give you as much pleasure as the first. The third I will bring with me in manuscript.

I hope to have the Ghost-story ready in good time.

I am full of curiosity about your new work. Meyer greets you. We shall probably come on Saturday, the 11th. In the interim you will hear from me again. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 3d January, 1795.

G.

XXXIX.

HERE you have the third book, to which I wish a good reception.

Saturday you will receive my little tale for the *Horen*; I hope that I may have approved myself not entirely unworthy of my great predecessor in describing forebodings and visions.

I shall see you Sunday afternoon. For the evening I have engaged myself with Loder to the club.

Meyer will come with me. I am delighted to hear of your new work, and am thinking constantly what course you have followed in it; but I shall probably not be able to hit upon it.

Farewell, and commend me to your friends.

WEIMAR, 7th January, 1795.

G.

XL.

JENA, 7th January, 1795.

FOR the unexpected copy of the *Novel* take my best thanks. The feeling which penetrates and possesses me with increasing force on reading this work, I cannot better express than by calling it a delicious inward contentment—a feeling of spiritual and bodily health, and I will answer for it that this effect will be the same with most readers.

This healthful operation I ascribe to the calm clearness, smoothness and transparence, which leave nothing behind to dissatisfy or disturb the mind, exciting it no further than is necessary to kindle and keep alive a gladsome animation. About individual parts I will say nothing until I shall have read the third book, which I look for with longing.

I cannot express to you with what a painful feeling it often is that I pass from a production of this kind to the philosophical. There, all is so joyous, so alive, so harmoniously evolved and so humanly true; here, all so severe, so stiff and abstract, and so unnatural, because all nature is only synthesis and all philosophy antithesis. True, I may say for myself, that in my speculations I have remained as true to nature as is compatible with the idea of analysis—perhaps even truer than our Kantians would

regard as allowable or possible. Nevertheless, I feel most sensibly the infinite distance between Life and Reasoning—and in a melancholy moment of this kind cannot help regarding as a deficiency in my own nature, what in a happier mood I must look on as a quality inherent in the thing itself. This much, however, is certain, the poet is the only true man, and the best philosopher is only a caricature in comparison with him.

I need not assure you, how full of expectation I am to learn what you say to my philosophy of the Beautiful. As the Beautiful itself is derived from entire human nature, so is this my analysis drawn from *my* entire humanity, and I cannot but be deeply concerned to know how this accords with yours.

Your visit here will be to me a source of nourishment for soul and heart. Particularly do I long to enjoy in common with you certain poetic works.

You promised me to take an opportunity to let me hear your Epigrams. It would be an additional great pleasure to me if you could do this on your coming visit, as it is uncertain how soon I shall be able to go to Weimar.

I beg you to give to Meyer my most friendly regards. All here rejoice at your and his coming thither, and no one more than your most sincere admirer and friend,

SCH.

Just as I am about closing I receive the welcome continuation of Meister. A thousand thanks for it.

XLI.

Nothing has come in the way of our purpose to see you to-morrow and to pass some time near you; I hope to find you well and cheerful.

The accompanying manuscript I have not been able to look through after it was copied. I shall be very glad if my endeavor to rival the great Hennings meets with your commendation.

Farewell, and greet your wife and friends.

WEIMAR, 10th January, 1795.

G.

XLII.

JENA, 25th January, 1795.

HAD you remained a day longer with us, we should have been able to celebrate together the advent of the *Horen*. They came yesterday, and herewith I send you your number of copies, and one for our friend Meyer. There are more at your service whenever you want them. I only hope that the outward appearance may meet the approbation of both of you.

Cotta writes in high spirits. So many orders have already been received, that he promises himself a large sale: and this from the mouth of a publisher is a credible assurance.

As I am about to send a package to Jacobi, I beg you to send me the letter you spoke of to enclose it, as I do not like to trouble you with the package. I also wish to know whether you design one of your copies for the Duke, for if you do, I shall omit to present him with one.

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All here beg to be kindly remembered by you.

Entirely yours,

SCH.

XLIII.

THANKS for the copies of the *Horen*; they have a very neat appearance. One of the small ones I have delivered to the Duke in your name, and think it would be well if you took the occasion to write him a word. I doubt not that the Journal will do well.

My third book is despatched; I went through it once more, bearing in mind your remarks upon it.

This week is passing away amidst theatrical troubles; after which I shall go actively to work again at my appointed labors.

I wish you health and spirits for yours.

Meyer greets you. Accept once more our thanks for all your kindness in Jena.

WEIMAR, 27th January, 1795.

G.

XLV.

JENA, 28th January, 1795.

I AM much obliged to you for your kindness in giving the Duke a copy of the *Horen* in my name. I herewith send you another, and as I expect some more from Cotta next Saturday, I will send some to you, together with the package for Jacobi.

I wrote to-day to the Duke. What he says to our Journal, I shall hear from you.

I have at last read in manuscript, I.'s famous review of the *Horen*. For our purpose it is very good—much better than for our taste. The images from Utopia have not yet entirely left his imagination; for he has much to say about eating.

He deserves praise for having extracted many passages

from the Epistle. Against me he has some grudge, which however he does not let appear, in order to avoid any kind of collision. I shall be glad if he thereby maintains in a skilful manner the character of impartiality.

I wrote to Herder a few days since, and beg you, if you have an opportunity, to sustain the request I have made of him.

Since your departure the Muses have not visited me very freely, and there must be a change in that respect, if I am to do honor to the Centaur of the fourth number. The children have had the small-pox, and got through them very happily.

SCH.

XLVI.

How much I desire that my fourth book may find you in good health and mood, and afford you some hours' entertainment! May I beg you to make a mark where you find anything questionable? I likewise commend my hero and his companions to Mr. Humboldt and the ladies.

If I do not come on Saturday as I hope to, you will hear from me again.

WEIMAR, 11th February, 1795.

G.

XLVII.

You told me the other day that you thought of coming over here soon. Although I fear that the return of cold weather may prevent you, I will still make you a proposal.

You could both stop with me; or, if your wife would like to lodge somewhere else, I still wish that you would take possession of your old quarters. Follow your own mind about it: you will both be heartily welcome.

Under the influence of the spirit which the recent conversation with you infused into me, I have already worked out the plan for the fifth and sixth books. How much more profitable it is to be reflected in others than in oneself!

Are you acquainted with the observations of Kant on the feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime of 1771? It would be a very clever work, if the words *Beautiful and Sublime* were not placed in the title, and occurred less frequently in the little book itself. It is full of delightful remarks on man, and one sees his principles already sprouting. You surely know it.

Has no intelligence been yet received of the absent Mr. Humboldt? * Commend me to your circle, and continue to refresh and elevate me through your love and confidence.

WEIMAR, 18th February, 1795.

G.

XLVIII.

JENA, 19th February, 1795.

THE wretched weather has again taken away all my spirits, and my threshold is once more the boundary of my wishes and peregrinations. How gladly will I avail myself of your invitation so soon as I can trust my health a little, if it be but for a few hours. I long much to do so, and my wife, whose heart is set upon the visit to you, will not let me rest until it is carried into effect.

I lately gave faithfully back to you the impression which Wilhelm Meister made on me, which is, therefore, as is natural, your own fire at which you warm yourself.

* The celebrated traveller.

Körner wrote me about it a few days since with infinite satisfaction, and his judgment is to be depended upon. I have never met with a critic who let himself be so little diverted by the accessories of a poetical work from the main design. He finds in Wilhelm Meister all the power of the *Sufferings of Werther*, only tamed by a manly spirit, and purified to the calm grace of a perfect work of art.

What you write concerning the little work of Kant, I recollect to have experienced on reading it. Of the fundamental principles of the Beautiful nothing is learnt in it; but, as a natural history of the Sublime and Beautiful, it contains valuable matter. For so serious a subject, the style seemed to me to be somewhat too playful and flowery; a singular fault in a Kant, which, however, is easily accounted for.

Herder has presented us with a treatise capitally executed, on a subject most happily chosen, in which the current notion of a particular destiny is handled delightfully. Things of this kind are especially suitable for our purpose, because there is something of the mystical in them, which, through the mode of treating them, may be connected with some general truth.

As we are on the subject of destiny, I must tell you, that I have within a few days decided something concerning mine. My countrymen have done me the honor to invite me to Tübingen, where they seem just now to be very busy with reforming. But as I have become unfit for an academical teacher, I would rather be idle here in Jena than anywhere else, where I am very contented, and where, if possible, I will live and die. I have, therefore, refused the offer, and take to myself no credit for so

doing, for my inclination alone decided the whole matter, so that I was not obliged to call to mind the obligations I owe to our excellent Duke, and which I would rather owe to him than to any one else. For a living, I think I need not have any anxiety, so long as I can hold a pen, and so I trust to Heaven, which has never yet deserted me.

Mr. Humboldt, of Bayreuth, has not yet come, and has not yet written anything certain about his coming.

Herewith I send you the Weissshuhnian papers of which I spoke to you. Please send them back soon.

We all commend ourselves heartily to your remembrance.

SCH.

XLIX.

How much I rejoice that you will remain in Jena, and that your fatherland has not been able to draw you back to it. I hope that we shall be able to do and perfect much together yet.

I beg that you will send me back the manuscript of the fourth book: I will return the Synonyms soon. Thus will the dance of time grow ever livelier. Farewell. More soon.

WEIMAR, 21st February, 1795.

G.

L.

JENA, 22d February, 1795.

ACCORDING to your request, here is the fourth book of Wilhelm Meister. Where I found something to object to, I have made a mark on the margin, whose meaning

you will easily find out: and if you do not, there will be nothing lost.

I must make a somewhat more important remark concerning the present of money made by the Countess to Wilhelm, through the hands of the Baron. It appears to me—and so it does to Humboldt too—that after the tender relations between them, she should not offer him such a present, nor he accept it. I sought in the context for something that could save her and his delicacy, and think that this would be done if this present were given him as a reimbursement for expenses incurred, and were accepted by him under this name. Decide yourself. As it now stands, the reader hesitates and becomes embarrassed how he shall save the hero's delicacy.

For the rest, I have enjoyed on a second perusal a renewed pleasure from the perfect truth of the descriptions and the excellent criticism on Hamlet. As to the latter, I could wish, merely for the sake of the linking together of the whole, and of variety, which is sustained throughout in so high a degree, that it were not set forth in one mass, but that, if possible, it could have been interrupted by some intervening occurrences. On the first meeting with Serlo, it is renewed too suddenly, and immediately afterwards again in the apartment of Aurelia. These, however, are trifles which would not occur to the reader, if you yourself had not created by all that goes before the expectation of the greatest variety.

Körner, who wrote to me yesterday, has charged me to thank you for the high pleasure that Wilhelm Meister has given him.

I must earnestly beg you to bear in mind our third number of the *Horen*. Cotta begs me urgently to send

him the manuscript earlier,—and says, that the tenth of the month must be the latest date on which he must have all the copy. It must therefore be sent from this on the third. Do you think that by that time you will be ready with the *Advocate*? My reminding must by no means put you to inconvenience, for you have perfectly free choice to give it to either the third or fourth number, as, at any rate, for one of those two numbers nothing is to be required of you.

We all commend ourselves warmly to your remembrance, and I beg you to greet Meyer for me.

SCH.

LI.

YOUR kind critical concern for my work has animated me with new courage to go through once more the fourth book. I understood very well your marks, and have availed myself of your hints, and hope to remedy the other deficiencies, and to improve the whole. But, as I must set to work at it immediately, you must excuse me for the third number, in return for which the *Advocate* shall make its appearance in all elegance in the fourth.

* * * * *

I hope soon to visit you, if only for a few hours. Though absent, let me not be distant from you.

Assure Körner that his interest gives me infinite pleasure. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 25th February, 1795.

GOE.

LII.

JENA, 27th February, 1795.

IF the fine weather which we have here, is enjoyed by you, I congratulate you on account of the fourth book of Wilhelm Meister. This announcement of Spring has quite refreshed me, and diffused on my work a new life which it much needed. With all our boasted independence, how dependent we are on the elements, and what is our will if nature fails us! That on which I brooded for five weeks, a mild look of the sun has loosed in me in three days: true, that probably my previous perseverance prepared this development, but still with the warming sun it came.

I obtain more and more command over my materials, and discover at every step that I make forwards, how firm and secure the ground is on which I have built. An objection that should overturn the whole, I have no longer any cause to fear, and against single errors in the application, the strong connection of the whole will itself secure me.

* * * * *

The new *Horen* are ready, and one copy of it has already been sent to me by the letter-post. To-morrow I expect the package. In this number we have fully corrected the fault we committed in the first, for, instead of seven sheets, it contains eight and a half.

According to your promise, we may every day expect a visit from you. All are well, and beg to be remembered by you.

SCH.

LIII.

HERE you have the Synonyms I forgot before. I read a short extract from it yesterday to some friends, without saying whence it came or whither it was going. They praised it highly.

It will not be amiss, if I often read out in this way from our manuscripts beforehand. It will have the effect of making a dozen people better disposed towards the Journal, and curious about the next number.

On the happy progress of your work I congratulate you. All that we can do is to build up the pile and dry it well: it will take fire at the right time, and we ourselves will wonder at it.

I send you a letter from Jacobi; you will see that he is doing well. I am pleased at the interest he takes in your letters. His judgment on my first volume* he has handed over to you for revision.

Farewell—I will see you as soon as I can.

WEIMAR, 28th February, 1795.

G.

LIV.

JENA, 1st March, 1795.

HERE I send you for the present four copies of the *Horen*, one of which I request you to deliver to the Duke. The others will follow.

The criticism of Jacobi has not at all surprised me; for it is as inevitable that an individual like him should be offended by the unsparing truths of your pictures, as it is that a mind like yours should give him cause to be so.

* Of Wilhelm Meister.

Jacobi is one of those who seek only their own ideas in the representations of the Poet, and prize more what *should be* than *what is*; the contest therefore begins in first principles, and it is utterly impossible that the parties should come to an understanding.

So soon as a man lets me see that there is anything in poetical representations that interests him more than internal necessity and truth, I give him up. If he could show you that the immorality of your pictures does not proceed from the nature of the object, but from the manner in which you treat it, then indeed would you be accountable, but not because you had sinned against moral laws, but against critical. But I should like to see how he could show this.

A visit interrupts me, and I will not detain the package.
SCH.

LV.

JENA, 8th March, 1795.

My expectation of seeing you last week was disappointed, but I hope this was owing solely to your zeal in keeping at work. But neither to see you nor to hear from you is what I cannot now accustom myself to.

I am very anxious about your present occupation. I have heard that you intend to have the third volume of Meister printed as early as midsummer. That would be sooner than I expected; but although I should rejoice on Meister's account, I should regret that you were thereby so long withdrawn from the *Horen*.

Of the fate of the second number, I have not yet been able to learn anything: perhaps you have heard something entertaining about it in Weimar.

Is our friend Meyer satisfied with his Essay? I hope he may be. Cotta writes me that this piece has pleased many, and I doubt not that it will do us honor.

Here I send you four more numbers of the *Horen*, among which is one for Meyer. Should you, instead of copies on writing paper, want one or two on post, be so good as to let me know—and send back those on writing paper. All send kind remembrances to you.

SCH.

LVI.

NOTWITHSTANDING a lively desire to see you and talk to you, I could not budge last week. Some play-actors, whose parts I wished to decide upon, the bad weather and a rheumatism I brought on by taking cold, have successively prevented me, and I do not yet see how and when I shall get away.

So much let me say, that I have been diligent, that the greatest part of the fourth book has been sent off, and that the *Advocate* is finished. I hope that the manner in which I have designed and executed this story may not displease you.

If my novel can appear on its appointed periods, I shall be content: a hastening of it is not to be thought of. Nothing shall prevent me from taking that part in the *Horen* which you wished.

If I economize and methodize my time, I shall be able to get through a good deal this year.

Of the second number of the *Horen*, I have as yet heard nothing: but the first stalks about formidably enough already in Germany.

Meyer thanks you for your editing of his ideas; there

are a few things that might be put differently, but these no one will notice. He is now at work on a representation of Perugino, Bellini and Mantegna.

From the accompanying paper, you see what periodical works are hereafter to come into our house. My plan is to have the table of contents of each number copied, and to annex a short review. In this way, at the expiration of half a year, we shall have a general view of what our cotemporaries are about.

If we show vigor and variety, we shall soon be above them all, for all other journals carry more ballast than merchandize ; and, as it is an object with us to make our labor the means of self-improvement, only good can thereby arise and be effected.

Many thanks for the copies you sent of the *Horen*.

Jacobi begs you to excuse him that he has not yet sent anything.

I hope that good weather will soon permit me to ride over to you, for I long much for a conversation with you, and to see your recent labors. Commend me to your friends.

WEIMAR, 11th March, 1795.

G.

LVII.

LAST week I became animated by a singular impulse, which fortunately continues. I felt a strong disposition to finish the religious book of my Novel, and as the whole rests on the noblest illusions and on the most delicate shiftings between the *objective* and the *subjective*, it requires a more favorable mood and more self-possession than perhaps any other part. And yet, such a representation

would have been impossible, as you will perceive in due time, if I had not previously made the studies for it after nature. Through this book, which I hope to finish before holy-week, an unexpected progress is made in my work, inasmuch as it points before and after, and at the same time fixes the boundaries, guides and carries forward. The Advocate is also written and only needs to be revised; you can therefore have it in good time.

I hope that nothing will prevent me from coming to you in holy-week and remaining with you some weeks: then we shall bring about some good.

I am very anxious to see what you have been doing: your first letters we have read again in print with pleasure.

In the Weimar public the *Horen* are making a great noise; but I have not yet heard any distinct *pro* or *contra*. People are very curious about it, and snatch the numbers out of one another's hands; we could not wish more for a beginning.

Mr. Humboldt must have been very diligent: I hope too to have some more talk with him about *anatomica*. I have arranged for him some very natural and very interesting preparations. Greet him and the ladies for me. The *Procurator* is at my door. Farewell, and love me—it will not be on your side alone.

WEIMAR, 18th March, 1795.

G.

LVIII.

JENA, 19th March, 1795.

ABOUT the picture that you have just sketched I am not a little curious. It must flow less than any other from your individuality, for to me this seems to be the cord which in you, and hardly to your misfortune, is struck the

least often. The more curious am I to learn how you shall have mingled this heterogeneous matter with your own nature. Religious enthusiasm does and can find place only in such minds as, contemplatively idle, sink into themselves, and nothing seems to be less your case than this. I doubt not for a moment that your representation will be true, but that it will be solely through the force of your genius, and not through the help of your peculiar individual feelings.

For some time I have neglected my philosophical labors in order to hasten something for the fourth number of the *Horen*. The lot fell on the siege of Antwerp, which is already very well advanced. The town shall have surrendered when you come. It is only since I have been at this labor that I discover how severe my previous one was ; for, without being at all negligent, it seems to me mere play, and only the quantity of wretched stuff that I must read, and which tasks my memory, reminds me that I am at work. It gives me too but a meagre enjoyment : I hope, however, that it is with me as with cooks, who have themselves little appetite, but excite it in others.

You would do me a great service, if you could send me punctually on Monday the long desired *Advocate*. I should not then be obliged to give the first part of my piece to the printer before the end was written. Should you, however, not be able to do it, I beg you to let me know as early as Saturday. I hope for the best.

I rejoice that you intend to spend Easter with us, and I am much in want of a lively excitement from without, from a friendly hand.

Pray greet Meyer warmly for me. I wish that he may soon be able to give us something more. The seal for the *Horen* I have not yet received.

All here beg to be remembered by you, and expect you with eagerness.

SCH.

LIX.

FOR the *Advocate*, who here appears, I wish a good reception.

Have the goodness to send it soon back to me, because I wish to go through it several times more for the sake of the style.

I am working everything out of the way that might hinder me from soon enjoying and instructing myself by your side.

WEIMAR, 19th March, 1795.

G.

LX.

JENA, 20th March, 1795.

I THIS morning received your package, which agreeably surprised me in every respect. One reads the narrative with uncommon interest: what particularly pleased me was the denouement. I acknowledge that I expected such a one, and could not have been satisfied, if you had not in this departed from the original. If I recollect right, in Boccaccio it is only the timely return of the old man that decides the success of the cure.

If you could send me back the manuscript early on Monday you would much oblige me. You will find little more to do to it.

SCH.

LXI.

I WILL send you the manuscript to-morrow evening by the horse-post.

On Monday the end of the fourth book will be despatched to Unger.

Next week I hope to get through all I have yet to do, be free, and go over to see you.

I wish success to the taking of Antwerp : it will have a good effect in the *Horen*.

Commend me to your friends. Meyer greets you : he is very diligent with various things. I hope that the slow-coming Spring may have a good influence on you, and that between this and the anniversary of our acquaintance we shall have brought about a good deal together.

WEIMAR, 21st March, 1795.

G.

LXII.

JENA, 25th March, 1795.

I RECEIVED to-day another letter, in which the old proposal from Tübingen is renewed, with the addition that I shall be exempted from all public duties, and shall have full liberty to exercise influence on the students in what way I prefer, &c. Now, although I have not changed my first determination, and shall not easily change it, some very serious reflections in regard to the future have, on this occasion, forced themselves on me, which convince me of the necessity of securing to myself a certainty, in case increasing ill-health should arrest my literary labors. I have written on the subject to Counsellor Voigt, and begged him to obtain from the Duke an assurance, that in such an extremity my pay

should be doubled. Should this be secured to me, I hope to avail myself of it as late as possible or never; but I should then be without anxiety about the future, and that is all that I can require.

As you might hear the matter spoken of, and might not know at first what to make of it, I thought I would explain it to you in a few words. We shall anxiously look for you next Sunday.

SCH.

LXIII. (a)

NOTWITHSTANDING I had some idle hours, I could not yesterday bring myself to visit you once more and take formal leave of you. I left Jena very unwillingly, and thank you again heartily for what you imparted to me and shared with me. Here first of all are the Elegies, which I beg to have back again as soon as possible: they shall then, after being divided into the proper number of lines, be copied.

For the Calendar I have found something, particularly for the Messrs. X. Y. Z., which I will send soon with the other things. Remind me often of what you want, so that my good will may show itself in deed.

Farewell, and greet your family and friends.

WEIMAR, 3d May, 1795.

G.

LXIII.

JENA, 4th May, 1795.

I HAVE this moment received the Elegies with your friendly lines. I have missed you every evening since your departure; one gets so easily accustomed to good. My health is slowly improving.

I wait with impatience for what you intend to send me for the Almanac. Until I get it I cannot make an estimate of my poetical change for this little work.

I will immediately take the Elegies in hand, and hope to send them back to you on Friday.

Huber writes me that he has an inclination to translate your Meister into French. Shall I endeavor to encourage him to do it, or dissuade him from it?

You may depend upon my aiding your memory.

My wife commends herself to your friendly remembrance. Greet Meyer for me.

SCH.

LXIV.

WEIMAR, 12th March, 1795.

THE package with the Elegies found me in an *elegiac* state according to the common meaning—that is, in a very wretched one. After the fine life in Jena, where in addition to so much nourishment for the soul I enjoyed the warm free air, the cold weather here has affected me most unfavorably; and exposure to a draught of air for several hours, gave me a catarrh-fever, which produced a violent pain in the right half of my head and disabled the left. I am now so far recovered that I can, without pain, go to work in my room, to bring up arrears.

As to the Elegies, we shall be obliged to leave out entirely the second and sixteenth; for their mutilated appearance will strike every one strangely, unless something were substituted for the objectionable passages, to do which I feel myself utterly unfit. They will have to be printed one after the other just as they come; for to make each one begin in a new page is not practicable, count and calculate as I will. With the number of lines in our page,

very unsightly spaces would occur more than once. But this I will leave to you, and will in a few days send the manuscript. The second volume of the Novel is delayed somewhere on the road. I ought to have had it long since, and wished herewith to send it to you. I am now on the fifth book, and hope by Whitsuntide to have little left unfinished.

Meyer* is very diligent. He has heretofore done capital things; and it seems to me that he improves every day in thought and execution.

Have the goodness to let me soon hear from you of your health, and whether anything new has occurred. Jacobi has again delayed his promise through Fritz von Stein.

14th May, 1795.

'This letter which has lain by me for some days, I will at least not keep back from to-day's post.

Have you seen the treatise on style in the plastic arts in the April number of the Mercury? That on which we are all agreed is very well said; but, that the writer should assert, that genius, which exists in the philosopher prior to all experience, does not pull him and warn him when with imperfect experience he sits down to prostitute himself. Truly, there are in this essay passages that would not be unworthy of Rochow.

Let me hear soon how you are.

G.

* This gentleman is the author of an excellent history of the fine arts with engraved illustrations.

LXV.

JENA, 15th May, 1795.

I ONLY heard the day before yesterday that you were unwell. It must fall very hard on one who is so little accustomed as you are to ill health. That the present weather has also not been favorable to me, is so much a matter of course that I need not speak of it.

I must say, that I am very unwilling to lose the whole two Elegies. I had thought that even their visible incompleteness would not have injured them in the estimation of the reader, because it were so natural to attribute it to a designed modesty. You need not, however, much regret this sacrifice, which the bashfulness required in a journal causes, as in a few years, when you collect the Elegies together, you can restore all that is now stricken out. I am anxious to have them, or at least one sheet of them, early on Monday, in order to send them off. I hope at least soon to finish my treatise, if no particular obstruction occurs.

Cotta is tolerably well satisfied with the Fair. It is true, that many of the copies which he sent on commission have been returned, but on the other hand as many have been ordered, so that upon the whole the estimate does not suffer by it. Only he begs urgently for greater variety in the articles. Many complain of the abstract subjects, many too are dissatisfied with your discourses, because, as they express themselves, they cannot yet discover whither they tend. You see, our German guests do not belie themselves; they must always know *what* they are eating in order to enjoy the taste of a thing.

I had a conversation recently with Humboldt about it; it is utterly impossible at the present time to obtain gene-

ral success in Germany with any production, be it ever so good or ever so bad. The public no longer has the unity of taste of childhood, and still less the unity of a finished culture. It is in the middle, between the two, and that is a glorious time for bad writers, but therefore the worse for such as do not wish merely to make money.

I am now very curious to hear what is thought of your Meister—that is, what the public spokesmen say; for that the public is divided about it, follows as a matter of course.

Of news here I have none to tell; for with the departure of friend Fichte, the richest source of absurdities is dried up. Friend Woltmann has sent into the world another of his unfortunate progeny, and in a very presumptuous tone. It is a printed plan of his historical lectures—a warning bill of fare, that must frighten away even the most hungry customer.

You do not know that Schütz has been ill and is better.

Your contributions to the Almanac I expect with great eagerness. Herder, too, will do something for it.

Reichardt has offered himself through Hufeland as a contributor to the *Horen*.

Have you read Voss's *Louise*, which is now out? I can send it to you. I will get the article in the German Mercury.

I wish Meyer success in his work. All here greet you heartily.

SCH.

P. S. Cotta sends me only thirteen copies of the *Horen*. I think that I have to send you three of them.

LXVI.

BEFORE my package is sent off I receive yours, and will add a few words.

A part of the Elegies will be despatched to-morrow evening by the horse-post. I am very anxious that no accident may interrupt your treatise. For the seventh number I can promise you nearly two sheets.

Let us only proceed on our way steadfastly ; we know what we *can* do and whom we have before us. It is now twenty years that I am acquainted inwardly and outwardly with the buffoonery of authorship : it must only be *played* on after the same fashion—there's nothing else to be done.

R. is not to be rejected, but you will be obliged to keep his importunity in check.

I have not yet seen *Louise* : you will do me a favor by sending it. I send you a volume of Herder's *Terpsichore*, which I beg you to return soon, and which will please you much.

My illness is pretty well over. I had already made arrangements to visit you at least for half a day ; but now I must put it off for some time. The rehearsals of *Claudine* will keep me here the next fortnight.

Farewell and greet our friends.

In the *Moniteur* it is set down, that Germany is chiefly celebrated for Philosophy, and that one Mr. *Kant* and his pupil Mr. *Fichte*, are the men that set up lights for the Germans.

WEIMAR, 16th May, 1795.

G.

LXVII.

HERE you have, at last, my dear friend, the second volume of Wilhelm. I wish him on his public appearance the continuance of your favor. I am trying now to get the fifth book in order, and as the sixth is already finished, I hope before the end of this month to have worked myself free for the Summer. I hope soon to hear how you are getting on.

The accompanying copies I beg you to distribute according to the subscription. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 16th May, 1795.

G.

LXXI.

JENA, 21st May, 1795.

THE bearer of this, Mr. Michælis of Strelitz, is the publisher of my Almanac of the Muses. If you can give him a few moments, will you have the goodness to consult with him and our friend Meyer, whether among the contributions which you design for the Almanac (including the Epigrams) there be not something suitable for vignettes, which perhaps Meyer would sketch? Custom requires this kind of decoration, and here I have no material for it. If you have among your small poems, ballads, or something of the same nature, they would be the best for the purpose. The Almanac is to be printed by Unger, and is to be very elegant.

I sent you, through Mr. Gerning, a request to let me know when Claudine will be played, in order if possible to be present at the representation, or to give my wife the pleasure of being. But she will probably take the measles, and so the whole little plan will be defeated.

I desire much to see you here soon again.

Michælis will tell you that in his region there is brisk demand for your Meister. May this letter find you in the best health.

SCH.

LXXIII.

HERE is half of the fifth book : it makes an era in the Novel—therefore I send it. I wish it a good reception. My illness has changed my plan, and obliged me to advance with this work. Pardon all mistakes, and don't forget the lead pencil. When you and Humboldt shall have read it, I beg to have it back. As I am very impatient under bodily suffering, I shall go to Carlsbad, which formerly freed me for a long time from attacks like this. Farewell. You shall have something soon for the Almanac, also for the *Horen*. I am curious to know what you will think of an idea I have, to enlarge the *Jurisdiction* of the *Horen*, and of periodical works generally. This is accompanied by a letter from a co-laborer.

May you be in health and not obstructed in your labors. How is Carl?

WEIMAR, 11th June, 1795.

G.

LXXIV.

JENA, 12th June, 1795.

THAT you have been again unwell I have heard with heartfelt regret from Mr. Humboldt ; and that, from such a cause, you are about to leave us for some time, I deplore still more. You were in so animated and happy an activity, and medicinal water is a bad Hippocrene, at least so long

as it is drunk. Meanwhile, may you only soon be able to set off, in order that you may return to us the sooner.

Since four or five days my fever has left me, and I am now quite satisfied with my health. Would that I were so with my diligence! But the passing from one kind of labor to another always goes hard with me, and now the more so, as I am to spring from metaphysics to poetry. I have built a bridge as well as I could and made a beginning with a rhymed epistle, at the top of which is written *Poetry of Life*, and which, therefore, as you see, borders on the subject I have left. Could you come, and blow into me your spirit only for six weeks, and only so much of it as I can take in, I should be rid of the difficulty.

* * * * *

That is a glorious fellow, the Hesperus,* that you sent me lately. He belongs altogether to the mongrel class, but is still not without imagination and humor, and has often a right droll idea, so that he is pleasant reading for the long nights. I like him better than the biographies.

My wife is better and Carl is doing well. When you pass through, you will find us, I hope, all improved.

Remember me to Meyer. Farewell and get well soon.

SCH.

LXXV.

HERE are the sketches of the letters we spoke of, in which there will be much to retouch, if you are satisfied with the leading ideas. Such essays are like dice in backgammon; there is produced mostly something not expected, but still something must be produced. Before

* A novel, by Jean Paul F. Richter.

the end of the month I shall not go from this, and will leave behind for you for the seventh number the usual quantity of the *conversations*. By that time too the second half of the fifth book will be copied, and thus I shall have turned adverse circumstance to as much account as possible for my labors. Farewell and do you the same. I wish success to the Epistle.

WEIMAR, 13th June, 1795.

G.

LXXVI.

JENA, 15th June, 1795.

The fifth book of Meister I have read with downright intoxication, and with one undivided feeling. Even in Meister there is nothing that has taken such powerful hold on me and borne me away so involuntarily in its twirl. Only when I had finished it did my mind recover its calmness. When I reflect through what simple means you have produced so absorbing an interest, my astonishment is still increased. Also as to individual parts, I found in it admirable passages. Meister's justification against Werner of his adoption of a theatrical life, this adoption itself, Serlo, the prompter, Philina, the wild night in the theatre, &c., are all singularly happy. You have turned the appearance of the anonymous ghost to such account, that I know not what to say of it. The whole idea is among the happiest that I know, and you have known how to drain to the last drop the interest it was susceptible of. At the conclusion, indeed, every one expects to see the ghost at the table, but as you yourself allude to this circumstance, one is satisfied that there must be good reasons for his non-appearance. As to who the

ghost is, there will be as many conjectures as there are persons in the novel who by possibility might have played it. The majority with us are quite certain that Marianne is the ghost, or at least in league with it. We are also disposed to regard the female elf who gets into Meister's chamber, as one and the same person as the ghost; on the last appearance I, however, thought of Mignon, who seems on that evening to have had many revealings concerning her sex. You perceive from this, how well you have succeeded in guarding your secret.

The only thing that I have to object to in this fifth book is, that it sometimes struck me that you have given to that portion which relates exclusively to theatrical life more space than is consistent with the free and large idea of the whole. It looks occasionally as if you were writing *for* players, whereas your purpose is only to write *of* them. The care you bestow upon certain little details of this subject, and individual excellences of the art, which, although important to the player and stage manager, are not so to the public, give to your representation the false appearance of a *particular design*; and even one who does not infer such a design, might accuse you of being too much under the influence of a private preference for these subjects. Could you conveniently reduce this part of the work into narrower bounds, the whole would certainly thereby be improved.

Now, a few words about your letters to the editor of the *Horen*. It has occurred to me before, that we would do well to open in the *Horen* a critical arena. Articles of this character would give at once additional life to the Journal and excite certain interest in the public. Only we must take care not to let the sword go out of our own hands, which

we should do, if through a formal invitation we yielded to the public and to authors a decided privilege. What we should receive from the public would assuredly be most contemptible, and we know by experience how troublesome authors would be. My plan is, to make the attacks from the midst of our own circle; and then, if authors wished to defend themselves in the *Horen*, they would have to submit to the conditions which we chose to prescribe to them. My advice, therefore, is, that we should commence at once with *doing* the thing, and not with a proposal about it. It will not hurt us to be thought saucy and ferocious.

What would you say if I, in the name of a Mr. X., made complaint against the author of Wilhelm Meister, that he takes so much pleasure in tarrying among players, and in his novel avoids *good society*? (For this is the general objection that the elegant world makes to Meister, and it were not superfluous, and not uninteresting, to set people right on this point.) If you are disposed to reply, I will fabricate you such a letter..

I hope that your health is improved. May heaven watch over your occupations, and have in store for you many more hours as beautiful as those were in which you wrote Meister.

I anxiously look for the contributions to the Almanac, and the *conversations* you promise. We are all better.

SCH.

LXXVII.

YOUR approbation of the fifth book of the Novel was very welcome to me, and has invigorated me for the labor that is still before me. I am pleased to find that the fan-

tastic and sportive mysteries have their effect, and that you testify in favor of the execution of the concerted situations. The more willingly have I availed myself of your objections relating to the theoretic practical chat, and have put the shears to work on several passages. Such remains of the early execution will never be got entirely rid of, notwithstanding I have shortened the first manuscript almost one-third.

With respect to the letters to the editor, and your plan in connection with them, we shall easily come to an agreement when we meet and can talk it over. I shall be with you about the end of next week, and if possible bring with me the promised tale.

On Saturday, I will send Meyer's treatise on *Johann Bellini*. It is beautiful, only, alas! too short. Have the goodness to send back to us the Introduction, which you already have, because there is something to be added to it.

I am glad that you do not dislike the new mongrel.* The man is really to be pitied; he appears to live very isolated, and cannot, therefore, with all the good there is in him, get his taste purified. Unfortunately he seems himself to be the best company he keeps.

I think of devoting the four weeks in Carlsbad to a revision of my labors in Natural History. I will make out a synopsis of what I have already done, and what I must next do, in order to have a framework ready for scattered experiments and observations.

What do you say to a work from which I have had the accompanying passage copied for you?

Farewell, and greet the Humboldts for me.

WEIMAR, 18th June, 1795.

G.

* In the original, *Tragelaph*.

LXXVIII.

JENA, 19th June, 1795.

HERE is the Manuscript of Meyer, with my best salutation to him. That I may expect something from him so soon is very gratifying. * * * * *

That you deem my objections relating to the fifth book worthy of your attention, gives me great pleasure and new courage. Together with the affection I have for this product of your genius, I am full of jealousy of the impression it makes on others, and I could not be good friends with him who should not know how to prize it.

Out of what mad-house you can have snatched the capital fragment I know not, but only a madman can so write. Friend Oberreit might have written it, but I doubt that he did. It has amused me much.

The Post is about to start. I rejoice that I shall see you soon again.

SCH.

LXXIX.

A TALE for the *Horen*, and a little sheet for the Almanac, may serve as my forerunners. Monday I shall be with you, and we shall have much to talk over. Voss greets you, and offers an antiquarian treatise on the groves of the gods, and, at any rate, a piece of ancient Geography.

Herder promises very soon something on Homer. It would be well if Jacobi should send something.

I am anxious to see what you have been at work on.

Give my respects to your dear ladies, and to the Humboldts. I am rejoiced that I shall see you again.

WEIMAR, 27th June, 1795.

G.

LXXX.

JENA, 6th July, 1795.

I AM so busy to-day with despatching the *Horen*, that I have only a few moments to congratulate you on your arrival in Carlsbad, which I hope has taken place happily. I rejoice that of the thirty days of your absence I can already wipe off four.

From Fichte I have received a letter, in which, while he points out very sharply the injustice I have done him, he is very careful not to break with me. With all his visible irritation he has controlled himself, and labors to play the reasonable. That he accuses me of having entirely misunderstood his work, follows as a matter of course. But that I accused him of confusion of ideas on his subject, this is what he has scarcely been able to forgive me. He will send me his treatise to read as soon as it is finished, and he expects that I will then retract my hasty judgment. Thus do matters stand, and I must do him the justice to say, that he has conducted himself very well in this critical situation. You shall read his letter when you return.

Of news here I have nothing to write, except that the daughter of Schütz is dead, and that he himself is tolerable.

Woltmann, who paid me a visit a few days since, assured me that it was not Fichte, but a certain F. (a young painter who studied here, and also writes poetry and travelled sometimes with B.) is the author of the treatise in the *Mercury* on Style in the plastic arts. B. himself related this, and declared in addition, that this treatise is the most sublime thing that ever has been written on the subject. I hope therefore that you will in your heart ask

pardon of the great *I** in Osmanstädt, and take at least this sin from his head.

Woltmann told me that he has commenced a novel, which I cannot make agree with his other historical activity.

I have yet heard nothing from Humboldt. I wish from my heart that your stay in Carlsbad may be serviceable to your health and to the work you took with you. If you should have an opportunity of sending me the rest of the fifth book, you would give me much pleasure.

I have sent off two copies of the *Horen* according to your instructions.

My wife sends her respects to you. Farewell, and hold us in friendly remembrance.

SCH.

LXXXI.

I WILL not lose the opportunity of sending you this letter by Miss Göchhausen. After overcoming tolerable and bad roads, I arrived on the fourth evening; until to-day the weather has been very bad, and now the first ray of sun seems to be only transient. The company is numerous and good: there is the common complaint of want of harmony, and each one lives after his own fashion. As yet, I have only seen and talked; what will yet come to pass and prosper, must be waited for. At all events, I have at once commenced weaving a little novel, which is very necessary to entice one out of bed in the morning at five o'clock. It is to be hoped that I shall be able so to temper the *sentiments*, and guide the incidents, as to make it last a fortnight.

* Fichte.

As famous author, I have been right well received, and in this character have been the subject of some strange mistakes; for instance, a most charming little woman told me she had read my last works with the greatest pleasure, and particularly had Ardinghello interested her beyond measure. You can imagine that I with the greatest modesty enveloped myself in friend Heinse's mantle, and could thus put myself on a more confidential footing with my fair patroness. And I need not fear that in these three weeks she will detect the blunder.

I become by degrees acquainted with the various people, among whom there are some very interesting, and shall have much to relate to you.

On the journey hither, I thought over several old tales, and a variety of things passed through my head as to the manner of treating them. I will one of these days write one out, in order that we may have a text before us. Farewell, and think of me.

CARLSBAD, 8th July, 1795.

G.

LXXXII.

CARLSBAD, 19th July, 1795.

YOUR valued letter of the 6th I did not receive until the 17th: how I thank you, that in the whirlpool of a perfectly strange world you let me hear the sound of a friendly voice. Miss Beulwitz takes this with her: I hope it will reach you soon.

The effect of the water is very good, but I lead the life of a genuine watering-place visitor, and pass my days in absolute idleness, am constantly among the company, where there is no want of pleasant conversation and little adventures. I shall have many things to tell of.

On the other hand, however, neither is the fifth book of the *Novel* copied, nor a single epigram achieved, and if the other half of my stay here is like the first, I shall return poor in good works.

I was very glad to hear that the *Osmanstädtan I* has behaved well, and that no breach has followed your explanation : perhaps he will learn by and by to bear contradiction.

To me too has the sublime treatise *F.* in the *Mercury* been praised by *B.*, and the name of the author revealed. It is but too true that this spirit of presumptuous halfness stalks in Rome too, and our friends there will become better acquainted with the three styles. What a strange mixture of self-delusion and clearness do these people require for their existence, and what a terminology has this circle created for itself, in order to appropriate that which does not become them, and to set up as the serpent of Moses that which they do possess !

But of all this more fully when I get back. My fingers are stiff and cold : the weather is vile, and everybody uncomfortable.

Live you the better, and warmer, and think of me.

G.

LXXXIII.

JENA, 20th July, 1795.

THAT for the last twelve days I have been ill, and thereby prevented from giving you any account of myself, my wife has written you. I hope you have received her letter, and one from me, which left this four days after you.

Yours has given me much pleasure, and I hope that the Heinsian mask may bring you many pleasant adventures.

It is well to find oneself well received by ladies under such a firm, for then the greatest difficulty is overcome.

I am impatient to hear what progress you have made in your health and your occupations. What I hear of the *Centaur* sounds very well. Everybody is delighted with the *Elegies*, and no one thinks of being scandalized by them. But the most formidable tribunals have not yet spoken. I, too, have my portion of praise for my share in the *Centaur*—indeed, I am even more fortunate than you, for scarcely eight days after the appearance of this number, I received from a Leipzig author a formal poem in my praise.

In the meantime, two new articles, from places whence I expected nothing, have been sent in for the *Horen*. The one treats of Grecian and Gothic architecture, and under a tolerably careless style, and with much that is unimportant, contains many good ideas. After a long deliberation whether I should accept it, the novelty and suitableness of the subject for the *Journal* determined me to do so, particularly as it is not long. The second, making scarcely a sheet, investigates the notions of the ancients on *Destiny*. It is by a man of superior talents, and a keen thinker, and I shall therefore make use of it without hesitation. I received it only an hour since.

Jacobi has at last sent in his *Essay*. It is full of excellent matter, particularly on impartiality in judging of the modes of representation of others, and breathes throughout a liberal Philosophy. I cannot define its subject. Under the title—*Occasional Outpourings of a Solitary Thinker* (in letters to Ernestine), a variety of things are treated of.

From Herder I have received neither manuscript nor

intelligence for many weeks. Humboldt is arrived safe, but found his mother ill.

My poetical labors advance very slowly, as I have been for whole weeks unfit for any kind of work. You will, however, find something when you come.

Farewell, and may heaven bring you back in health and spirits.

SCH.

LXXXIV.

A LETTER can arrive sooner than myself, therefore will I thank you for your last. Your first letter was twelve days on the road, the second five, and the last seven ; so irregular is the Post.

I am sorry to learn that in the meantime you have left off work from necessity. I have continued the life I began, lived only in company, and been very well content. One might travel a hundred miles without seeing so many people and so closely. No one is at home ; hence, every one is more accessible, and the more disposed to show his best side. The fifth book is copied, and the sixth can be ready in a few days. Little has been done at the Epigrams, and nothing at anything else.

I congratulate you on the new contributions, and am curious to read them.

About you I am much questioned, and I answer according as the question is. Generally, the public has only a most obscure idea of the author. One hears nothing but old opinions : of his development and progress very few take any note. I must, however, be just, and say that I have met with some who are in this respect remarkable exceptions.

The sixth number of the *Horen* has not yet penetrated into these mountains.

Farewell : greet your dear wife from me.

CARLSBAD, 29th July, 1795.

G.

LXXXV.

EXPECTATION continues to rise, but yet one sees already from a distance that the forest begins to grow brighter with light. The mention of the Marianne has a fine effect, and Mignon grows with each book. The gloomy Harper gets ever gloomier and more mysterious, and Philine pleases me as much as ever. It is delightful how in this book you recall to mind past persons and scenes.

Much attention is to be recommended on account of the many names of authors, also on account of some irregularities in the manner of writing (sometimes *des Publicums*, sometimes *des Publici*, &c.). In the poem at the end, you have used a word long, which by position is necessarily short, and a verb short that must remain long.

Pardon my scrawl. I must hurry, in order not to detain the manuscript longer.

I hope soon to hear from you again, and wish you joy on your arrival at Weimar.

My friendly salutation to Meyer.

SCH.

LXXXVI.

HERE I send you at last the collection of Epigrams, on single sheets, numbered, and for the sake of method, with an index annexed : for several reasons I do not wish my name to appear on the title. In the motto I think it advisable to point to antiquity.

In the arrangement of them I have placed those which belong together in succession, and sought also to produce a certain gradation and variety ; but, at the same time, in order to avoid all stiffness, I have intermingled in the forefront under the Venetian head, forerunners of the other kinds. Some which you have run your pen through, I have endeavored to make acceptable by modification. No. 78 I wish (however unimportant it is) kept in the place it is, in order to irritate and vex the school, which, as I hear, triumphs at my silence. If you meet with anything else to object to, let me know, if there is time, and if not, correct it yourself without hesitation.

I wish to have a few extra copies of this little book to lay them by for use in a future edition.

Will you give a particular charge on the score of misprints : some very ugly ones have crept into the Elegies.

So soon as the Almanac is published, I could make short notes for the Elegies and Epigrams, in which the mistakes of the press should be mentioned, and insert them as an article in the *Horen*, which might serve more than one good purpose : how easy it would be to refer in a few words at the end of the title book to these really indispensable notes.

I send this package by a messenger, in order that it may reach you as soon as possible, and in order that I may get back the Novel which I must not delay any longer.

I foresee that I shall have to go to Ilmenau the beginning of September, and that I shall not get away from there for ten or fourteen days : between this and then I have much to do, and I should like to know from you, what you want for the *Horen*. I think I could furnish you as follows :

August—Conversations, conclusion of the last story. Hymn, which I wish you to send back to me for this purpose.

September—Drama and Novel. The little tale. With this I would close the Conversations, and it were perhaps well if, though a product of the imagination, they were projected into the Infinite.

October—Continuation of the tale. Notes to the Elegies and Epigrams.

November and December—Announcement of Cellini, and, if possible, something from Faust.

As to this last, it is with me as with a powder that settles down after its solution in a liquid; so long as you stir it, it seems to unite again, but the moment I place it before me, it settles by degrees to the bottom.

Write me before all else how you are and how your labors go on, and farewell.

WEIMAR, 17th August, 1795.

G.

LXXXVII.

JENA, 16th August, 1795.

I TOOK your late promise literally, and counted with certainty on seeing you here to-morrow: this is the reason why I kept Meister so long, and wrote you nothing concerning it. I could have wished very much to talk with you about it, because in a letter one does not think of everything, and for such things dialogue is indispensable. It seems to me that you could not have seized the subject from a more happy side than you have done in the manner in which you unfold internally the silent communion between the *human* and the *holy*. This relation is tender

and delicate, and the course you make it take is exceedingly accordant with nature.

The transition from Religion generally to the Christian, through the experience of sin, is a masterly conception. The leading ideas of the whole are admirable, only, I fear, somewhat too gently indicated. Nor am I sure that to many readers the story will not seem to stand still. Perhaps it would have been well had several parts been drawn a little nearer together, others compressed, on the other hand, some leading ideas more expanded. Your endeavor to purify your subject and as it were restore it to honor, by avoiding the trivial phraseology of devotion, did not escape me ; but, nevertheless, I have marked some passages which, I fear, a Christian spirit might reprehend as being treated with too much levity.

These few words on what you have said and intimated. This subject, however, is of such a nature, that one is tempted to speak of that which is not said. True, this book is not finished, and therefore I do not know what may yet follow ; nevertheless, the appearance of the Uncle, with his sound reason, seems to me to bring on a crisis. If this is so, then the subject, I think, is concluded too quickly : for it seems to me, that too little is said of the Christian Religion proper and the Christian Religion's enthusiasm ; that that which this religion may be to a fine spirit, or rather what a fine spirit can make out of it, is not sufficiently set forth. I find in the Christian religion virtually the foundation of the highest and noblest ; and the various manifestations of the same in life, appear to me only therefore so repugnant and insipid, because they are failed representations of this highest. If we confine ourselves to the peculiar characteristic of Christianity, which

distinguishes it from all monotheistic Religions, it consists in nothing else than the *Abrogation of the Law* (the Kantian imperative), in the place of which Christianity arises to establish a free will. It is, therefore, in its pure form, the exhibition of beautiful morality, or the embodying in man of the holy, and in this sense the only *æsthetic* Religion; thence, too, I explain to myself why this Religion has had success with female nature, and only in women is met with still in a bearable form. But I will not in a letter say more on this delicate subject, and only add, that I should have liked to hear this cord sounded a little.

Your wishes respecting the Epigrams shall be minutely conformed to. The misprints in the Elegies vexed me too very much, and I had the most important of them immediately pointed out in the intelligence-sheet of the Literary Gazette: they are, however, mistakes of the copier, and not of the compositor, and therefore will be the more easily guarded against in future.

By the performance of what you promise for the remaining months of the *Horen*, you will gratify me greatly, and I again repeat my petition concerning Faust. Let it be, too, only a scene of two or three pages. The tale will give hearty pleasure, and the Conversations for this year conclude very well.

I have not been better in body this week, but nevertheless have been in a mood to write some small poems, which will increase my collection.

Farewell—I long to see you and our friend Meyer.

SCH.

LXXXIX.

To the Hymn, which I send herewith, I have done as much as the shortness of the time will permit. The end of the narration and the transition to the tale I will send over as soon as possible, but I do not think that it will make one printed sheet. For the tale itself I feel in a good mood; it amuses me, and will therefore probably be amusing to others too.

Your testimony that with my seventh book I have at least passed the rocks safely, is of great value to me, and your further remarks on the subject have very much gratified and encouraged me. As the heroine of the sixth book derives from the appearance of the Uncle only so much as suits her, and as it is only in the eighth book, in another generation, that I exhibit the Christian Religion in its present sense, and as I agree fully with what you write of it, therefore, you will in the end find nothing wanting, particularly if we talk the matter over once more together.

It is true that I have entered this field with a very gentle step, and, by avoiding every kind of dogmatizing, and completely concealing my purpose, have perhaps somewhat weakened the effect on the great mass of the public. It is difficult in such cases to keep the middle way.

Farewell—Meyer greets you. More soon.

WEIMAR, 18th August, 1795.

G.

XC.

My present contribution turns out to be rather a spring than an easy transition from common life to a tale of wonder. You must make the most of it.

Herder's Homer, which I have just read with Meyer, is excellent, and will give lustre to the *Horen*. I will see that you get it to-morrow by the carrier woman. You will receive the first part of the tale before the end of the month. Farewell,

WEIMAR, 21st August, 1795.

G.

XCI.

Friday Evening, 22d August.

I RECOLLECT once about seven years ago, sitting in Weimar with all my money spent, except about two Groschen,* and not knowing whence any more was to come. In this extremity, think of my delightful surprise on receiving, that very day, a long forgotten debt of the Literary Gazette. 'Twas indeed the finger of Providence, and so was too your to-day's package. I knew not what I could send to Cotta, who wants copy for the ninth number; and you, like a messenger from Heaven, send me, only it is true about half a sheet, but yet enough, with the Apollo, to make a whole one.

I shall scarcely have time to read this manuscript, although I shall look through it carefully in regard to orthography.

I rejoice at your account of the tale, for it seems to me to come into the world under good auspices.

Herder's treatise will be, too, a most agreeable apparition to me.

Humboldt greets you. I shall have all kinds of curious things to tell you about the *Horen* and something about Meister, when you come over, which I beg you to do soon. Farewell,

S.

* A Groschen is about two cents.

XCIII.

TO-MORROW morning I go with Councillor Voigt to Ilmenau, and would be happy in my roving, if I could think that I left you well and not hindered in so much good by sickness. Meyer greets you. I am anxious to hear that the tale has in the end made a good impression upon you, and removed the first unfavorable one. When I say to you farewell, it means always—make use as heretofore of favorable hours for our enjoyment.

WEIMAR, 24th August, 1795.

G.

XCIV.

FROM social, idle Carlsbad, I could not have passed to a more opposite existence than that up in secluded Ilmenau. The few days I have been here have flown very rapidly, and I must remain here eight days longer, if I wish to understand the affairs as well as is desirable. I always liked to be here and do so still; I believe it is because of the harmony of everything; region, men, climate, occupations. A quiet, moderate, frugal endeavor, and everywhere the union of handicraft with machinery, and, notwithstanding its isolation, a greater intercourse with the world than many a little city in a level accessible country. Thus far I have not had an idea but what related to the place; it was, however, necessary that I should get this business off my mind before the winter. Fare you well in other regions, and think of me.

ILMENAU, 29th August, 1795.

G.

XCV.

JENA, 29th August, 1795.

THE tale is variegated and lively, and I find very well put in practice the idea you once mentioned—"the mutual aid given by the faculties and the referring back of one to the other." My wife is much pleased with it; she finds it in the Voltaire style, and in this I think she's right. For the rest, by your manner of treating it, you have laid on yourself the obligation of making everything symbolical. One cannot refrain oneself from seeking a meaning in everything. The four kings made a fine show, and the serpent as a bridge is a charming figure. Very characteristic is the beautiful lily with its pug-dog. The whole presents itself as the production of a gay mood. Yet I could have wished that the end were not separated from the beginning, because both halves have so much need of one another. If, therefore, it is the same to you, whether it appears in one or divided, I will begin the next number with it. I can fortunately make out for the ninth, and then, if the tale goes into the tenth number entire, it will be the more welcome.

The conclusion is wanting to the epigram which I send herewith. Be so good as to send it back to me by the earliest opportunity. My health is not yet much better. I fear I must pay for the lively excitement into which my poetizing put me. For philosophizing, the half of the man is sufficient, and the other half can repose; but the Muses suck one out.

Take my heartfelt greeting for your birth-day.

SCH.

P. S. I have not yet sent a copy of the eighth number to the Duke. Be so good as to attend to it.

If you wish to write to Humboldt, I can enclose the letter.

XCIX.

JENA, 9th September, 1795.

WE wish you joy on your return to Weimar. Why can I not share with you these little changes which strengthen the body and soul !

The tale will now have to be deferred to the tenth number, as during the time that I was waiting for your determination, I was obliged to send the best of my treatises for the ninth. It is also the more needed for the tenth, because I have not yet any brilliant prospect for it : and if you still wish it divided, the conclusion can follow in the eleventh. But I am never in favor of separating where this can possibly be avoided, because we cannot so fix the attention of the public, that it will take into view the whole of a thing, and thereafter form its judgment.

If the sixth book of Meister is finished, can you not think of something more for one of the last numbers of the *Horen* ? We must now put out all our sail, for I know from several places, also from Cotta's letters, that we are by no means sure of retaining all our subscribers for the next year.

For the ninth number I have done honestly what I could. I have inserted in it all my larger and smaller poems that were not absolutely necessary for the Almanac, so that this number contains seventeen articles, which will make people open their eyes. I will send you the table of contents.

During the time that you were absent, I have alternated between prosaic and poetical labors. A treatise on the *Naïve* that I have commenced promises well ; the subject at least developes itself, and I find myself on an excellent track.

I hope we shall see you soon again. My wife greets you.

SCH.

C.

JENA, 13th September, 1795.

ONLY a small sign of life. I can by no means accuse myself to being eight days without either writing to you or hearing from you.

Everything here with me is pretty much in the old condition. I am not yet out of my room, but my labors proceed, notwithstanding, on their way. I figure you to myself as just now much busied with giving instruction to Meyer, who I suppose will set out soon on his journey. Greet him warmly from me.

I wish to know whether it is at Vicenza that the beautiful bridge is carried (over the Etsch I think) in one arch. Write me a word about it. I want this bridge for an hexameter.

If you would only consent to give some little additional alms to the last three numbers of the *Horen*, in the form of a dozen epigrams, or similar little poetical things. I shall make the same request of Herder, and will myself try to catch some ideas, for such little things increase the number of articles at a trifling cost, give pleasure to every reader, and make as much show in the table of contents as the longest. In this way I have made the ninth number contain seventeen articles.

NINTH NUMBER.

1. Realm of Shadows.
2. Contributions to the History of Modern Plastic Art.
3. Conversations—Continuation.
4. Hymn to Apollo.
5. Schwarzburg. Poems by Madame Mereau.
6. Homer, by Herder.
7. Nature and Art, by me.

8. Veiled Portrait, idem.
9. On the necessary limits of the Beautiful, particularly in the explanation of philosophical truths. Dissertation by me.
10. German Faithfulness.
11. To a Reformer.
12. Antique to a Traveller.
13. The Philosophical Egotist.
14. The Ghost.
15. Wisdom and Prudence.
16. Iliad.
17. Immortality.

} Poems by me.

In the last number of the *Archives of the Times* there is an answer to your article on *Literary Sans-culottism*. I have not read it, but only seen a notice of it in the *Hamburgh Gazette*. If you get the number in Weimar, be so good as to let me see it.

The Almanac is now in press. Humboldt will be back here again in three weeks if nothing intervenes.

My wife greets you. Be not too diligent, and stay not too long away from Jena.

SCH.

CI.

I HAVE not written for some days because I designed to visit you, in which I have been disappointed. Meyer is making preparations for setting out, and is now at work on a colored drawing of the three Fates, which you must see. I wish him only health; in other respects he goes equipt with all excellent qualities. He is a glorious man. As to myself, I have, as you will easily understand, latterly stood only on one foot, and stretched out the other towards

the Alps. The mineralogical and geological basis, the original and the progressive, and the interrupted culture of the land, I have endeavored partly to get an insight into, partly a general view over; and have fully discussed too with Meyer the department of art. And yet all this is only school exercise. May a good genius aid us in seeing, in drawing just conclusions from what we see, and to a happy re-meeting!*

I think daily of the *Horen*, and hope to furnish something more. May you have been able to enjoy the fine weather in the open air.

The chastised Thersites cringes, I hear, pitifully begs off, and only beseeches to be allowed to live. I have not yet seen his piece.†

Farewell and believe my prophecy, that with the new year the subscribers to the *Horen* will rather increase than diminish.

WEIMAR, 14th September, 1795.

G.

CII.

I FORGOT in my last letter to say anything of your question about the bridge. There is not at Vicenza any noted one-arched bridge. The two there, built by Palladio, are tri-arched. Nor, except the Rialto at Venice, do I recollect any such in that region.

Besides the repentance of the literary Sans-culotte, another friendly star has appeared for the *Horen*, inasmuch as Genz, in his monthly journal, does great reverence to

* All this refers apparently to the preparations for his friend Meyer's journey.

† Alluded to in Schiller's previous letter.

the letters on *æsthetic* education. All this is very seasonable, and it were worth considering, whether we should not, before the end of the year, declare ourselves on certain matters, and spread hope and fear among authors and reviewers.

We shall visit you soon; have the goodness to send me back the tale, it shall be returned to you completed. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 16th September, 1795.

G.

CIII.

JENA, 18th September, 1795.

ACCORDING to your request I send the tale. If I have it back in eight days it will be in time for the press.

I am heartily thankful for the encouraging news you give me about the *Horen*. I also hope that the last numbers of the year will be still more successful. They will contain a great deal of exactly that which was missed in the foregoing, viz.: poetry and narrative. A few days since Engle too sent me another article, more than three printed sheets long, of a character very suitable for the public, part dialogue, and part narration; in truth no prodigy of genius, but just the kind of thing that our dear readers like. But that there will be something for those also who are too good for such offerings, *you*, I gladly and firmly believe, will provide.

The tenth number is safe through the tale. Only the eleventh, therefore, is to be cared for, and in that we must concentrate our strength. Variety, particularly, we must not fail to give it.

If you would only move Herder to give us for the last

numbers, little things, as Epigrams in the style of the anthology, &c.

Humboldt writes me from Berlin that the three last published numbers are well spoken of there.

If you get the *Archives of the Times* and the Genzian Monthly sooner than I, be so good as to send me the capital things.

I am glad that I shall see you here soon. We both greet you.

SCH.

CIV.

THE tale is finished, and will be sent to you newly copied on Saturday. It was well that you held it back, partly because it has now been improved in many respects, partly because it is not unreasonably long. I beg particularly that your dear wife will read it through again from beginning to end.

In the middle of next week I hope to come over with Meyer: I shall feel his absence very much. If I can only in the Winter be some time with you!

I have much to say and to ask, and hope to find you well, with much work done. Greet Humboldt for me.

WEIMAR, 23d September, 1795.

G.

CV.

WHAT I have been about in these troublesome times, you will learn, my dear friend, from the annexed. Blessed are they who write tales: for tales are *à l'ordre du jour*. The landgrave of Darmstadt has arrived in Eisenach with two hundred horse, and the emigrants there threaten to

move their quarters thither. The Elector of Aschaffenburg is expected in Erfurth.

* Ah!—Wherefore stands the Fane not on the river!

Ah!—Wherefore is the Bridge not yet built up!”

I wish, as we must ever nevertheless remain men and authors, that my production may not displease you. How serious every trifle becomes, the moment one treats it according to the principles of art, I have on this occasion again experienced. I hope that the eighteen figures of this Drama will be welcome, as so many riddles, to the lovers of riddles.

Meyer is packing up, and we shall be with you soon: I hope that you have much to regale us with. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 26th September, 1795.

G.

CVI.

I HEAR from our friend, who sends his best regard to you, that you have entirely buried yourself in your room, in order to hasten your novel, because Unger is urgent to have it. My best wishes for this labor. I am full of curiosity to see this third part in one mass.

The day after to-morrow, then, we shall see you again, at which I am heartily rejoiced, and which I have long hoped.

Humboldt will not return here this winter: this is a great disappointment to me.

Have the goodness to bring with you the *Archives of the Times*, which contains the famous answer to your

* Ach!—Warum steht der Tempel nicht am Flusse!

Ach!—Warum ist die Brücke nicht gebaut!

attack, and also the number of the new monthly work, in which *my praise* is set down. I can get sight of neither here.

I hear with pleasure that you are endeavoring to obtain for the *Horen* a new acquisition of which I have beforehand a good opinion.

The Tale has entertained us much, and is sure to please universally. More orally. Farewell.

JENA, 2d October, 1795.

SCH.

CVII.

My wish to see you again has been latterly, constantly disappointed. To-morrow I hope to be with you and to learn what you have done in the interim.

That you think I have been successful with the Tale, pleases me greatly, and I wish now to discuss with you the whole genus, and to make some further experiments.

The end of the sixth book of my Novel goes off on Monday, and this volume will soon wait upon you printed. In the following one the stone will roll down hill, and the most of it is already finished and written.

The journals you ask for I will have sought out, in order if possible to bring them with me.

The Knebelian Elegies are well conceived, and in more than one sense good and satisfactory. Perhaps I will bring some of them with me.

WEIMAR, 3d October, 1795.

G.

CVIII.

INSTEAD of hurrying away from you yesterday, I would much rather have remained, and the uncomfortableness of

a dissatisfied state of mind accompanied me the whole way. In so short a time one thinks of such a variety of subjects and executes none, and however much may be set in motion, little comes to maturity.

On the journey back I thought over your poems. They have peculiar excellences, and I may say that they are now what I before expected from you. This singular union of contemplation and abstraction, which is in your nature, shows itself here in perfect equilibrium, and all other poetical virtues are in attendance in beautiful proportions. It will give me pleasure to see them again, in print, to enjoy them repeatedly, and share the enjoyment with others. The small poem in stanzas to the public would close very appropriately this year's series of the *Horen*.

I have set to work immediately with Madame de Staël and find more labor in the task than I expected: I will, however, go through with it, for it is not much. The whole will make about fifty-five pages of my manuscript. The first part, of twenty-one pages, you shall have soon. In a short preface to the publisher I will explain the manner in which I have proceeded in the translation. In order to spare you petty corrections, I have made the words approximate to our mode of thought, and at the same time endeavored to give a little more precision, after our German fashion, to the French indefiniteness. In individual passages you will find much that is good, but as she is prejudiced, yet at the same time acute and honest, she can by no means obtain harmony with herself; but you can make good use of it as text. I wish that you would take pains and be as clear and gallant as possible in your work, in order that hereafter we may send it to her, and thereby

make a beginning towards leading the dance of the *Horen* over into transformed France.

G.

CX.

I SHALL see you soon again, for my journey to Frankfurt is given up. Madame de Staël will be with you before I shall: the copying is almost done. Did you speak to Humboldt about his lodgings? It would be very pleasant if I could take possession of his little room, as the tread of the military is not likely to cease soon in the castle. I am now at the Novel with all my heart and mind, and will not waver till I have conquered it. Farewell, and think of me in your labors, and greet your dear wife from me.

EISENACH, 16th October, 1795.

G.

CXI.

16th October, 1795.

COULD I have supposed that you would remain longer in Eisenach, I should not have so long deferred writing to you. It is a satisfaction to me to know that you are on the Main, far away from strife and bustle. The shadow of the giant might easily fall on you ungently. It often strikes me as strange, when I think of you launched upon the busy world, while I am sitting between my paper windows, and have nothing but paper before me: and that we, nevertheless, are near to each other, and can understand each other.

Your letter from Weimar gave me great pleasure. For every hour of courage and confidence, there are always ten in which I am faint-hearted and know not what to

think of myself. At such times such a view of myself from without is a great consolation to me. Herder, too, wrote me a short time since a most friendly letter about my poems.

This much I now know from certain experience, that lightness can only be obtained by severe precision in the thoughts. Formerly I believed the opposite and feared hardness and stiffness. I am now glad that I did not let myself be deterred from pursuing a difficult course, which I regarded as often destructive of poetical imagination. This exertion, however, strains the mind exceedingly, for while the philosopher can let his imagination repose, and the poet his abstracting faculty, I am obliged in this manner of proceeding, to keep both faculties always in equal action, and only by a constant excitement within me can I hold these two heterogeneous elements in a kind of solution.

I look for a de Staël sheet with much curiosity. If the space will permit it, I am for putting the whole at once into one number. I will then let my comments follow in the next number. In the mean time the reader will have made his own, and will listen to me with more interest. In the short term that is yet left for the eleventh number, I should hardly have time to get them ready, even though I should receive the translation on Monday next. Herder has also sent for the eleventh number a treatise on the Graces, in which he endeavors to restore these abused personages to their old rights. He promises another article for the twelfth number. I hope to get ready for the eleventh my dissertation on the *Naïve*, which will be several sheets long, and is, I think, written in a popular style. Nor will there be any want of little poetical addi-

tions. Herewith I send you some trifles of mine. 'The *Partition of the Earth** you might very properly read out aloud from a window in Frankfort, which is a suitable locality for it. If it amuses you, read it to the Duke.

In the other piece I have ridiculed a philosophical axiom: philosophy appears always ridiculous, when, with her own means, without acknowledging her dependence on experience, she pretends to enlarge the domain of knowledge and give laws to the world.

I am glad that you intend soon to take Meister in hand again. I will then not delay to master the whole, and if I can, I will try on it a new kind of criticism, according to a synthetical method, if, what I cannot now undertake to say, such a one be possible.

My wife, and my mother-in-law, who is at present here, send their best regards to you. I have been asked here, where you now are, but I did not think it necessary to say. If you receive any accounts from our Italian traveller, pray communicate them to me. Farewell.

SCH.

CXII.

Sunday Evening.

I AM impatient to receive from you a token that you are alive. It seems to me a very long time since I heard from you. The event in your house has, I hope, been happily got through with.

We live now in the buffeting times of the middle ages. It is a real *Ecclesia Militans*—the *Horen* I mean. Besides the nations that Mr. J. in H. is at the head of, and that Mr. M. of the library of S. W. has had ordered out, and

* A short poem by Schiller.

besides W.'s heavy cavalry, we have soon to expect a rough attack from Nicolai of Berlin. In the tenth portion of his travels, it is said that he treats of scarcely anything else but the *Horen*, falls foul of the application of Kantian Philosophy, and throws everything, the good as well as the bad, into one pot. It is a question now, whether we ought to answer these platitudes. I would rather be for contriving a means of making an indifference to them conspicuous. We should, however, henceforward, in texts and notes, and at every opportunity, treat Nicolai with a marked contempt.

Have you seen the new *Almanacs of the Muses*? They are execrable. Farewell.

SCH.

CXIII.

ALTHOUGH I shall be in Weimar again on Wednesday, I send you beforehand the treatise: I have not even been able to look through it since it was copied: here and there, there will be something to correct. Perhaps I shall visit you at the end of the week, and we will see each other again sooner than I expected. What an empty life is a divided* life! One learns exactly that which one does not care about knowing.

EISENACH, 17th Oct., 1795.

G.

CXIV.

WELCOME to Weimar! I am right glad to know that you are again near me. I regret that you could not be here during the last eight days. With the fine weather I

* Divided is the nearest I can come to the German *zerstreut*, which means here a life divided among a variety of objects.

felt much lighter, and rode out again to-day, which agreed very well with me. On the other hand, no work has been done for several days.

Mad. de Staël I expect with curiosity.

My letter, which I wrote to you at Eisenach on Friday, you probably have not yet received, and had set out before it arrived.

I am looking for an answer from Humboldt about the lodgings. As I do not know whether his room can be given up to another, I have touched upon the subject so lightly that he may feel at liberty to pass the subject by in silence. I shall be rejoiced if you can get accommodated here comfortably.

I wish all prosperity to the Novel. I do not doubt that the best for the whole now is, that you devote yourself to it without interruption. For I look upon it as no unimportant advantage, if you have the last volume finished some months earlier than it will be wanted for the press. You have a large account to close: how easy it were to forget a trifle.

If you can find among your papers the letter I wrote to you last year, after my return to Jena, as the opening of an *æsthetic* correspondence, have the goodness to send it to me. I think of making something out of it. My wife, and mother-in-law, who is spending some weeks here, send their respects.

SCH.

CXV.

I AM curious to learn what the paper will bring us: so early as yesterday I heard a buzz about it at the theatre.

I do not come to-day, my dear friend, but I hope soon. Every day, I expect a new citizen of the world in my

house, to whom I would like to give a friendly reception. In the mean time the castle will be purified from military effluvia, and I shall be able to remain some days with you.

Farewell ; commend me to the ladies, and keep me in your love.

In these last interrupted days I have busied myself with my Italian collections, and begun to arrange them, and perceived with great joy that with some industry a marvellous work may be put together.

Have you no copy of the treatise on the *Naïve* ?

WEIMAR, 25th October, 1795.

GOETHE.

The letter you inquire for I have not yet found. It is, however, certainly near at hand.

CXVI.

JENA, 25th October, 1795.

I CONGRATULATE you beforehand on the new inmate. Let it be a girl, and then we shall be able by and by to become kin to one another.

I forgot the day before yesterday to write you about Madame de Staël. The work is written with much genius, and as there is in it more thunder and lightning than common weather, it is well calculated to be commented upon. To introduce strict harmony into it would be difficult, and would not repay the trouble.

You have several times used the word *seduce* [verführen], speaking of poetry. I wish to know what this is in the original, whether it has the general meaning of *deceive* [täuschen], because *seduce* used in an *æsthetic* sense has an accessory signification.

I am glad that you find in your Italian papers so much booty.

I have been always curious about these papers, judging by the little that you have made known out of them. In your search, remember the *Horen*, and turn a branch of this Pactolus into it.

I am anxious to know what you will say to the Wolfian attack when you shall have read it. Herder wishes that I should notice it merely as an editor, and to the extent that the *Horen* shall be involved; and as I do not think it advisable to keep perfect silence, and at the very outset to let the adversary have the last word, I will rather do this than that nothing at all be said.

I have read the two new Almanacs of the Muses, which are beyond measure meagre and miserable. I have given them to Herder to take with him. Farewell: I hope to hear from you again soon.

My family greet you.

SCH.

CXVII.

SINCE my return I have not been myself; I only, therefore, send you the letter you asked for.

I believe I have said nothing as yet of the small poems you sent me at Eisenach: they are very pretty, particularly *The Lot of Poets*, which is charming, true, pointed, and cheering.

Would it not be well for you now to look around in all directions, and collect everything that has been said against the *Horen* in general and in particular, and pass judgment upon it at the end of the year? The Halle Philosophical Journal, too, is said to have behaved in an un-

seemly manner. When one binds up these sort of things in bundles they show better.

Farewell. Love me. Commend me to your wife and her mother. Your little daughter-in-law has not yet made her appearance.

WEIMAR, 28th October, 1795.

G.

CXVIII.

INSTEAD of a little girl a boy has at last arrived, and thus is one of my cares put to sleep. Now it is for you to provide a girl in order to create the relationship and increase the poetic family. I shall now come soon, and am really in want of a talk, such as I can have with you. I continue still out of the path of poetry. From outward causes I have been occupied again with architecture, and have put together something to facilitate and fix the judgment in regard to specimens of this art.

From Meyer I have a letter from Munich with very interesting accounts of that place, also from Nuremberg. I will bring them with me. Tell me how you are, and think of me.

WEIMAR, 1st November, 1795.

G.

CXIX.

JENA, November 4, 1795.

My heartfelt congratulations to the new comer. I should not have begrudged you a pair, but that can be made up. Now I hope to see you here soon, and rejoice in the prospect. Humboldt will be much pleased, if you will look upon his lodgings as entirely yours. The only doubt about the matter was, that Hellfeld, who had stipu-

lated in their contract that there should be no sub-letting, might make a difficulty. But as there is no question of letting, he will not be so silly as to plead the contract. In order to be fully prepared, I have in my hand a letter from Humboldt to him, which I will deliver, if you will only accompany it with a short note to Hellfeld, asking him for the key. If you pay him this respect, he will be very accommodating. I am sure that you will like these quarters better than the castle.

Your Elegies have found (as the enclosed letter from D. Gros to Mr. Humboldt will show you) a great and by no means unimportant admirer in the Latin world too. I send you the letter itself; perhaps you may like to gratify the wish, which the writer expresses, and contribute something. It seems to me that I have already on some occasion spoken to you of this gentleman, so much I can say with confidence, that our academy would make no insignificant acquisition in him. I know few among the new generation who have so sound a head, so much solid understanding, and so correct a judgment. In the law department he was held in much esteem at Göttingen.

I am waiting for Meister with impatience. Celerity, it seems, is not Unger's fort.

Farewell. My wife sends her best regards.

SCH.

Did you receive the *Heren* all right last Monday? The eighth copy for Meyer I gave to Miss Imhof, as our friend directed. The copies are in bad condition, and, moreover, I picked yours out. Cotta gives as excuse the war, which, he says, interfered with the delivery of paper.

CXX.

20th November, 1795.

FROM our hearts have we bewailed the loss you have suffered. One consolation, however, you have, that it has happened so early, and therefore strikes your hopes rather than your affections. I hardly think I could bear it, if I were now to lose my boy.

For six days I have been quite tolerable, and made the most of the favorable time to push forward in my dissertation.

Schlegel wrote to me lately, and sends something for the *Horen*. He is in ecstasy about the tale: the Humboldts, too, are much pleased with it. Will you have leisure to get the new one finished for January *at the latest*, it might still go into the first number. This I should like exceedingly, as we ought to begin well, and I have as yet nothing in the department of narration.

On the new volume of Meister, for which we thank you, I have already collected various opinions. Every one thinks the sixth book in itself very interesting, true, and beautiful, but feels that the progress of the story is arrested by it. This, to be sure, is not an æsthetic judgment, for at the first reading, particularly of a narration, curiosity is more intent upon the story and conclusion than taste is upon the whole work.

Are you still inclined to hold back the last volume for a year?

Mr. P. has sent me to-day a villainous production: *Aurora, or the Child of Hell*, which is a miserable imitation of *Biondetta*. He has the glorious idea of developing the whole magic as a mere machinery of a maid in love with the hero, who thereby endeavors to overcome him. All the rest is worthy this wise conception.

Farewell, and may all the Muses be with you. My wife greets you.

SCH.

CXXI.

I have received your kind letter, and thank you for your sympathy, which I already knew I had. One knows not in such cases whether it is better to let grief have its natural way, or by the aid which culture offers us, to bear up against it. If one resolves upon the latter, as I always do, one is thereby bettered only for a moment, and I have remarked, that nature always at one time or other asserts her rights.

The sixth book of my Novel has also produced a good impression: to be sure with such productions the poor reader does not himself know how matters stand with him, for he does not reflect, that he never would take these books in his hands, if the author did not understand how to laugh at his mode of thought, his sensibility, and his inquisitiveness.

The testimonials in favor of my Tale are of high value to me, and I shall in future go to work in this department with more confidence.

The last volume of the Novel cannot appear before Michaelmas: it were very well if we timed our plans, of which you lately spoke, in reference to this.

The new Tale can hardly be finished in December, nor must I pass on to this one, until I shall have said something or other of the interpretation of the first. If I can furnish something neat of this kind in December, I shall be glad in this way to take part in the first entrance into the new year.

Farewell! May we long enjoy those who are dearest to us and our friendship. At the new year I hope to visit you again.

WEIMAR, 21st November, 1795.

G.

CXXII.

25th November, 1795.

I AM very curious to see the Smith performance, and doubt not that the better sort of our readers will thank us for it. It will not, however, please the larger portion of them, that I'm sure of. They are only to be won by productions of the stamp of Lawrence Stark. You would not believe what general delight this work gives. No other has been so much talked of.

Your displeasure against St. L., and their colleagues, has communicated itself to me. I shall be heartily glad if you give them a slap. For the rest, it is but the *Histoire du jour*. It never was otherwise, and never will be. Be assured that if you once write a novel or a comedy, you must always write novels and comedies. Nothing further will be expected from you, nothing acknowledged; and, had the celebrated Newton made his *début* with a comedy, not only his optics, but even his astronomy, would have been for a long while sequestered from him. If, out of sport, you had ushered your optical discoveries into the world, under the name of —, or some such lecture-room hero, you would have seen wonders produced by them. It is certainly less on account of the innovation, than of the person from whom it proceeds, that these ignoble people set their faces so against it.

I should like to see St.'s delictum. I should be very glad if you can send it to me. In this man, obscurity and

feebleness are united in such a degree, that I can have no sympathy for and with him. That strange fellow, Jenish, in Berlin, who must have a finger in everything, has also read the notices of the *Horen*, and, in his first excitement, wrote a treatise on me and my character as author, which was intended for a defence against their complaints. Fortunately, a friend withheld the manuscript from Genz, for whose monthly journal it was designed, and prevented the printing of it. But I am not secure against his having it printed somewhere else. It is particularly hard, that with such bitter and numerous enemies, I should still have the most to dread from the folly of a friend, which would have the effect of silencing at once the few voices that are raised in my favor.

I shall be able to furnish a very full review of your Meister in August or September of next year, and then it will be very *à propos*, I think, to publish the last volume at Michaelmas, 96, or Easter, 97. Perhaps there were some *morceaux* in the last volume that you might throw out to the public, for their momentary contentment, at Easter, 96, at which time the whole will be expected.

I received yesterday, at last, a fine historical article from Archenholz, entitled *Sobiesky*, which must also appear in the last number of the *Horen*. I would have given much that you could have done something for the first number of the second year. Perhaps you are disposed to open the war in this number. You will receive from Herder my treatise on the Sentimental Poets, of which you have only heard a small part, and which I beg you to read through. I hope you will be satisfied with it; it is the best I can do in this kind. I think that this last judgment upon the largest portion of German poets, will have a

good effect at the end of the year, and, especially give Messrs., our critics, something to think about. My tone is free and firm, although, at the same time, I hope, nowhere wanting in liberality. In my progress I have, to be sure, struck about me lightly in all directions, and there are few who come out of the conflict unwounded.

On Naturalness, and its Rights, I have (with reference to the Elegies) spoken at length, on which occasion Wieland is slightly grazed. But I cannot help it; and, as people have never thought (nor Wieland neither) of suppressing their opinions of my faults, but, on the contrary, have let me hear them often harshly enough, I have therefore now, when I happen to have the game in my hands, not withheld my opinion.

Farewell. I shall rejoice if, after New Year, we can live together again for a good space.

SCH.

CXXIV.

HERE I send you the last filth of the noble shallow proser.* The passage marked in the Preface, is the one to be taken hold of some time when one has nothing better to do.

It is incredible how ignorant in general these people are; for who does not know that the Christians appropriated to themselves whatever was reasonable and good, by ascribing it to the *logos*? and my dear Christian does just that, page 304, and people will not think hard of the good creature on that account.

A letter from Prince August,† which I send herewith,

* One of the Counts Stolberg is probably here referred to.

† The Grand Duke of Weimar.

will give you pleasure ; it is none of the worst productions of his peculiar humor. The copy, for Humboldt, I beg you to send me back ; he has had his from Berlin.

I am very curious to see your treatise on the Poets. What I know of your ideas on this subject, has been latterly of much service to me in practice : however little one creates with consciousness, one needs it constantly, particularly in long works. For the rest, as to what you say of the Poets, I cannot take it ill of a man who has let the tricks pass for a long while, that he should now, when he gets the trumps in his hands, play them out too.

Weisshuhn's article, in the sixth number of Niethhammer's Journal, pleased me much. This mode of philosophizing interests me far more than that of Fichte : we must read the article together ; I wish to have your thoughts on several points. In the arranging of my physical experiments, it is, I find, of great use to me that I have looked latterly down upon the philosophical battleground oftener than formerly. This moment I received your treatise, and shall enjoy the pleasure of reading it in the first quiet hour. As soon as you have something more certain about the subscription to the *Horen*, pray write it to me. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 25th Nov., 1795.

G.

CXXV.

I HEREWITH send your treatise back, with many thanks. As this theory treats me so well, nothing is more natural than that I should approve of its principles, and that the conclusions to which they lead should appear to me just. I should, however, have now more distrust in regard to it, had I not at first been myself in a hostile state of mind

towards your views. For it is not unknown to you, that, from a too great partiality for ancient poetry, I have often been unjust to modern. Now, for the first time, through your doctrine, can I obtain harmony with myself, as I can no longer revile that which an irresistible impulse forced me, under certain conditions, to produce, and it is a very agreeable feeling not to be entirely dissatisfied with oneself and one's contemporaries.

I have, in these last days, set to work at the Novel again, and have every cause to keep to it. The demands which, through the first volumes, the reader is entitled to make, are really, in proportion to the matter and form, immense. One seldom sees how much one owes, until one comes to settle up accounts and pay off. But I am in good spirits. Everything depends upon this—that I make the most of my time, and miss no propitious mood. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 29th Nov., 1795.

G.

CXXVI.

JENA, 29th Nov., 1795.

THE letter of Prince August has entertained me: it contains, particularly for a Prince, much fine humor.

Could we not, through the Prince, obtain, in order to translate it for the *Horen*, Diderot's tale *La Religieuse*, which is to be found in the written Journal, and which, as far as I know, has not yet been translated? From the same Journal is taken also *Jacques le Fataliste*, and it has been published, translated by Unger, in Berlin.

If it can be done, I would like to become a member of the Weimar Journal Society, and can furnish three journals, either

Clio, or
Posselt's European Annals, or
Flora.

If they have these journals already, and would not wish to countermand them, I will pay the common contribution in money.

It here occurs to me that I owe a half carolin to Mr. —us (I don't know the first syllables of his name), who engraved for me the seal for the *Horen*. Will you be so good as to advance this to him for me?

The St. Preface is execrable. Such a consequential shallowness, a presumptuous impotence, and an affected, evidently affected, piety—even in a Preface to Plato to praise Jesus Christ!

It is an eternity since I heard from Jacobi, although, out of politeness, he should have written to me about some small Poems I sent him, and sent him at his request.

If you happen not to have despatched my treatise by to-day's post, have the goodness to send it by Tuesday, that is, if you do not wish to keep it longer. I wish to send it to Humboldt. I am full of curiosity about your opinion of it. When I now look back, and note how far I have ventured here, without leader, merely with the help of the principles which flow from the body of my system, I am greatly rejoiced at the fertility of these principles, and promise myself much more from them for the future.

The remainder of the treatise, which is just finished, and which treats of the Idyls, is not yet copied. You will receive it to-morrow, or the day after. In January, there will be a supplement to the treatise, under the title, on *Insipidity* and *Overstraining* (the two rocks of the naïve

and the *sentimental*). In this I have a mind to start a hare-hunt in our literature, and to regale especially some good friends, such as Nicolai and company. Farewell.

SCH.

CXXVIII.

ON the accompanying note you have information concerning the Journals: you have now only to make the necessary arrangements with the carriers, and you will receive them regularly.

Here are also my Elegies; I hope that you will be satisfied with them; I have worked a good deal at them lately: but one seldom gets done with one's own things, and with translations never. If you find anything to remark upon, communicate it to me. It were well if these new ones could appear together; they do not make, all of them, more than a sheet and a half: the others shall arrive by degrees.

What provision have you for the next quarter, and what do you hear of the new subscription?

If you have got back the treatise on the Sentimental Poets, I should like to read it once more; I have still some doubts about the conclusion, and when the spirit warms one, one should at least not conceal it. As the whole is so long and broad, it seems to me, on closer reflection, to terminate too narrowly and too much in a point, and, as this point happens to come exactly between me and an old friend, it makes me a little anxious. But, of this, orally. No more to-day but farewell.

WEIMAR, 9th December, 1795.

G.

CXXIX.

JENA, 15th Dec., 1795.

My treatise on the Sentimental Poets, which I had twice copied, was sent to the press three weeks ago, but you need have no anxiety about the conclusion. You have only read what was then ready; to that, however, have been added eight more pages, relating to the Idyls, with which the treatise ends for the twelfth number. The real conclusion, however, will be in the first number of the New Year. You and Mr. W., therefore, do not fall at the end, and, I think, that when the treatise shall be fairly concluded, the total impression, and the interest of the subject, will prevent every private reference. Farewell.

SCH.

CXXX.

MANY thanks for the honorary,* for which here is a receipt. It seems, that, as in the *partition of the Earth*, we poets were cut off very short, an important privilege was granted us, namely, that we should be paid for our fooleries.

The Poem to which I here allude, meets with great admiration, and people are very curious to know who wrote it.

For the rest, at present the *Dogspostdays* [*die Hunds-postage*] is the work on which our refined public bestows its surplus of admiration.

If the treatise does not end just with that ticklish note,

* Referring to a fee for his Epigrams published in the Almanac, which S. had sent him.

the effect of the latter will thereby be diminished, and we must wait to see what comes of it.

Have you seen the accompanying Hymn with which you have been honored? I have, at any rate, had it copied. One perceives, too, from this, that one must in literature imitate the sower, who only sowed, without regarding where his seed fell.

Of the notes to the Elegies, we will make as much use as the time will permit. In so extraordinary a language as the German, there is always something left to desire.

For the January number I would be glad to work up something, but the Novel, to my comfort, now takes up all my time. It was necessary that this last volume should make itself, or it would never have been got through with, and now I am strongly urged on to the finishing of it, and the so long collected and arranged pile begins at last to burn.

I would advise that the de Staël essay be not postponed beyond February, because, at Easter, a translation will probably be published. The French copies are spreading in Germany.

Perhaps, by March, I can have ready the tale, of which I gave you a sketch, and take the opportunity of a short introduction to it to get over the explanation of the first. That this does not miss its aim, you will learn from the accompanying letter from the Prince.

It were very well if we could make use of the *Religieuse* for the *Horen*. You can best obtain permission to do so through Herder; I would prefer not to ask for it, because, on the occasion, my travesty of the Claron story might be thrown up to me.

Iffland will not come so soon; they are obliged by the

Conquerors to play in Manheim. About Easter he hopes to come.

I am getting ready to be able to visit you at New Year, for I long much to go through with you the whole circle of your theatrical labors, and thereby strengthen myself for the labors I have before me. I value therefore the more your principles and directions, because they insure to me our friendly relation, and promise an increasing concordance ; for, unfortunately, it is oftener opinions on things, than things themselves, whereby men are separated, of which we have daily in Weimar the most melancholy examples.

Farewell, and greet your dear wife for me. Has anything been done at the drawing.

WEIMAR, 15th Dec, 1795.

G.

CXXXI.

JENA, 17th December, 1795.

How I envy you your present poetical mood, which permits you to live in the midst of your Novel ! I have not for a long while felt so prosaic as in these last days, and it is high time that I shut up for a while the philosophical booth. My heart thirsts for something with a flavor.

It is capital that the acute Prince here is so completely at fault about the mystical meaning of the Tale. I hope you will let him lie under his delusion for a while ; and, indeed, were you not to do so, he would not believe you out of your own mouth were you to tell him he was on the wrong scent.

That the *Hundspostage* is at present all the rage in

Weimar, is to me physiologically remarkable; for one would never dream that the same taste could bear such perfectly heterogeneous things as this production and *Clara du Plessis*. Such an instance of want of character in a whole community I never met with.

The little Poem you were so kind to have copied for me, was sent to me by its author last summer in manuscript. I am glad that here and there one sees something glow and blossom; and a public manifestation of this kind is particularly agreeable to me just now, because it will greatly annoy my adversaries.

Cotta, who wrote to me a few days since, can give me no information yet about the new subscription. I however refer favorably from the fact that no orders have been yet received for discontinuing.

I will endeavor to engage Herder to translate *La Religieuse*. The de Staël essay I shall not defer later than February. A translation in the first number, in which there is already a poetical one, would have laid us open to the attacks of the gentlemen.

Farewell. My wife thanks you for your remembrance. Not much has been yet done at the drawing.

SCHILLER.

CXXXII.

I HAVE made as much use as possible of your kind and judicious remarks on the Elegies, which I here send back: in this way it is possible to bring this kind of works constantly nearer to perfection.

I have in these last days been reading and studying Lawrence Stark.* I cannot say that I have been much

* A celebrated novel by Engel.

edified by it. At first there is an air about it which captivates one, but in the sequel it is found lamentably wanting.

On the other hand, I have found the novels of Cervantes a real pleasure, as well of entertainment as of instruction. How delightful it is when one can recognize as excellent that which is generally so recognized, and how much is one furthered on one's way when one meets with works which are constructed on those very principles by which—according to the measure of our ability and range—we ourselves are governed !

Farewell. More soon.

WEIMAR, Dec. 17, 1795.

G.

CXXXIII.

I WAIT with longing for the new year, and am striving to get off my hands a variety of little matters in order to be able to visit you again for a short time without hindrance. I hope that I may find you well and in poetical activity, for after all that is the finest condition that it is given man to enjoy. My Novel shall not now rest until it shall have worked itself to its end, at which I am much rejoiced, for amid all kinds of occupations and distractions it goes steadily forward.

I have a variety of things to communicate. Here, for instance, I send you an explanation of the dramatic characters of the tale by friend Charlotte. Do send me another explanation that I may give it to her in return.

The idea which has lately occurred to me of writing epigrams upon all the periodical works, each in a distich, like the *Xenia* of Martial, we must cultivate, and insert a collection of them in your *Almanac of the Muses* for the

next year. We must write a great many, and then pick out the best. Here are a couple as a sample.

I have obtained within a few days P. Castel's work, *Optique des Couleurs*, 1746 : the lively Frenchman gives me great satisfaction. I can hereafter have whole passages printed from it, and prove to the multitude that the true nature of the subject was publicly known in France in 1739, but was suppressed.

I have hastily added some variations to the explanation : if you can still increase them, we may expect from these interpretations an endless confusion.

The *Xenia* I will send soon.

Dec. 23, 1795.

G.

N. B. The variations underscored with red are mine.

CXXXIV.

JENA, Dec. 25, 1795.

My best thanks for the Elegies. I think there is now nothing in them which can give occasion to the scribblers to be insensible to the beautiful spirit of the whole on account of trivial defects.

Lawrence Stark, Humboldt wrote me, was originally intended for a comedy, and then accidentally thrown into the narrative form. It has the merit of having a light tone, but it is rather the lightness of the hollow than of the beautiful. When minds like E.'s* wish to be true and naïf they run such danger of being flat. But, most divine flatness ! that is the very thing which recommends them.

Have you seen the admirable pictures of the Seiferdorfer Valley with Becker's (of Dresden) descriptions ? As so

* ENGEL, the author of *Lawrence Stark*.

great a lover of ornamental gardens and of sentimental productions I recommend this work to you. It merits, together with Rachnitz's work, to be worthily mentioned in the *Horen*.

Herder refers me back again to you about *la Religieuse* of Diderot: he is moreover of opinion, that either it has been already translated, or that it will appear next Easter with other tales of Diderot. According to this it would not be a safe undertaking for us.

Heaven prolong for you the happy mood, in order to finish the Novel.* I look for the *dénouement* with intense expectation, and shall have a rare enjoyment in studying the whole.

The success of my little poem, the *Partition of the Earth*, must be put to your account, for I have already heard from many that it is ascribed to you. On the other hand, your paper on *Literary Sansculottism* has been attributed to me.

We send you our best wishes for Christmas. Would that you could pass it here with us! Farewell.

SCH.

CXXXVI.

29th December, 1795.

THE thought about the *Xenia* is capital and must be carried into effect. Those you sent me to-day diverted me much, particularly the gods and goddesses. Such titles help a happy idea. If, however, we wish to complete the hundred, we shall have to fall foul of individual works; and what rich material there is for us! If we do not alto-

* Wilhelm Meister.

gether spare ourselves, we may lay hold of both the holy and the profane. What matter have we not in the Stolberg brotherhood, Racknitz, Ramdohr, the metaphysical world with its I's and not I's, friend Nicolai, our sworn foe, the Leipsig tavern of taste, Thümmel, Goeschen as his master of horse, and others of the same stamp!

* * * * *

Woltmann's Tragedy is wretched and in no respect available; a thing without character, without probability, without naturalness. More tolerable is the Operette, but even it is only tolerable by the side of the tragedy. Have you read a work on Zoonomy by Brandis? In it your work on the Metamorphosis is treated with great respect. But it is laughable that, because your name is on the title-page, and you have written novels and tragedies, one must of course be reminded thereof. "A new proof," thinks the author, "how favorable poetical genius is to scientific truth."

I look forward to your approaching visit here with no little pleasure. We will once more have a thorough shaking up of everything. You wont fail to bring your "knitting," that is, the Novel, with you? And then we will take care that there be, *nulla dies sine epigrammate*.

You speak of a great dearth in the theatrical world. Has it never occurred to you to try a piece of Terence for the stage? Thirty years ago a man by the name of Romanus worked up very well the *Adelphi*, at least according to Lessing's testimony. For some time past I have been looking again into the old Latins, and Terence was the first that came into my hands. I am translating extemporaneously to my wife the *Adelphi*, and the great interest we take in it leads me to expect a good result. This very

piece possesses a noble truth and reality, lively action, well marked characters, and throughout an agreeable humor.

The theatrical roll contains a vast mass of names and very little matter. For my part I have done very well: but in what company does one behold oneself! To you is magnanimously attributed a *Julius Cæsar*, for the which you will remain debtor to the public.

But wherein does not friend P. write? Farewell. My wife greets you.

SCH.

CXXXVII.

PRODUCTIONS like those I send herewith you ought not to remain ignorant of: probably they have not yet reached you. I beg you to send me back soon the Theatrical Calendar.

With a hundred *Xenia*, like the inclosed dozen, we could gain favor with the public as well as with our colleagues.

It is well that the reviewing of the poetical portion of the *Horen* has fallen into the hands of a man of the new generation: with the old we shall never harmonize. Perhaps I shall read them with you, for, if it be possible, I shall leave this on the third of January.

It is very agreeable to me that we are confounded together in our labors: it shows that we are freeing ourselves more and more of mannerism and are attaining to what is universally good. And then we must consider what a beautiful breadth we can cover if we hold fast with one hand and with the other reach out as far as nature has permitted us to reach.

Would that Woltmann's tragedy were presentable! I would bring it out immediately. Every one wishes to write, and does write, and yet we have on the stage the bitterest dearth.

Farewell. I strive to keep myself clear of everything that could detain and distract me in order again to pass some profitable time near you.

WEIMAR, 23th Dec., 1795.

G.

CXLII.

1796.

You have surprised me very agreeably with the rich store of *Xenia* which you have sent. Those on Newton will, from the subject, reveal you as their author; but, on a learned controversial matter, which touches not the living, this is of no consequence. Those which are marked have pleased us most.

Could you not honor our *soi-disant* friend Reichardt with some *Xenia*? I have just been reading a review of the *Horen* in his *Germany*, a journal published by Unger, wherein he has taken gross liberties with the *Conversations* and also other papers. Long extracts are given from the treatises of Fichte and Woltmann, and both are represented as masterly. The fifth piece (the worst of all) is pronounced the most interesting. Voss's Poems and the *Rodian Genius* of Humboldt are much extolled, and more in the same vein. It is written throughout with an ill-concealed bitterness. There is a long criticism (but of what character I have not read) of Heinse's musical novel, as the most important work of modern German literature.

Reichardt, who thus attacks us without any ground,

and so unsparingly, must be hit hard in the *Horen* likewise.

Here are some more arrows into the flesh of our colleagues. Choose among them those which please you.

Farewell. My wife sends her regards.

SCH.

CXLIII.

22d January, 1796.

HERE is a small parcel of epigrams. Those you don't like fail not to leave out. These little jests are slower work than one would think: one has not the benefit, as in a longer production, of a continuity of thoughts and feelings. They will not surrender their original right as *happy thoughts*. I doubt, therefore, whether I shall outstrip you so much as you expect. However, if I don't get on with them, I must set myself down to larger matters, and seize the epigrams as they come up. But no post-day shall be empty, so that in four or five months we shall have made good progress.

Your epigrams in the Almanac have great success. Of this I have constantly new manifestations, and from people of whose judgment one need not be ashamed. That the Almanac makes its way in Weimar, by the side of the *Emigrants* and the *Dogspostdays*, is to me very consolatory intelligence.

May I trouble you with a small commission? I want sixty-three ells of handsome green hangings, and sixty-two ells of border, which I leave entirely to your taste and theory of colors. Could you send Mr. Gerning after it,

and give the order so that I may have it in six or eight days?

Farewell.* My wife greets you.

SCH.

To a certain Moral Poet.

Yes, man is a poor wretched wight, I know: but I wished
To forget it, and went—O! how I rue it—to thee.

The Kantian.

Shall not a hollow skull Kantish phrases contain?
Did'st thou never in a hollow nut see devices?

CXLIV.

FOR the next few days I shall lead a bustling life. To-day the Duke of Darmstadt and family arrive; to-morrow dinner, concert, supper, and ball, at Court. Monday, Don Juan. The rest of the week will be occupied with rehearsals, for on the 30th we give the *Advocates* of Iffland, and on the 2d, the new opera. After that, I will gather myself up as soon as possible, and see what I can do. Through this crowd of strange forms the eighth book† makes itself visible to me often, and I hope with the first opportunity to finish it.

In the last Epigrams you sent me there is a delightful humor, and I shall therefore have them all copied. Those which will not be able to hold their places in this set, will separate naturally and form a new body.

Farewell, and enjoy the fine weather.

23d January, 1796.

G.

* The German is *Leben Sie recht wohl*, which, literally rendered, would be *Fare you right well*.

† Of Wilhelm Meister.

CXLV.

JENA, 24th January, 1796.

FOR an author who is occupied with the catastrophe of a novel, with a thousand epigrams and two extensive narratives from Italy and China, you have for the coming ten days a very tolerable quantity of distractions. But what time takes from you, it returns to you again in material, and in the end you are further advanced than I am, who have to suck my subjects out of my nails.

Woltmann was yesterday three whole hours alone with me, and I managed so well that not a syllable was spoken of the two dramatic pieces. He was very civil, and liberal of praise of your works and mine,—without, however, awakening in me a spark of commiseration on account of his play.

Farewell. Here are some more *Xenia*, in order that the custom be not departed from.

SCH.

CXLVIII.

THE first Act is surmounted! A show for the ball of yesterday, which I helped to arrange. All went off well, although the hall was full to overflowing. As everybody now speaks only in distichs, even the Turkish Count had to present his compliment to the Grand Duchess in this form of verse, as you will see by the accompanying paper. Another party had gotten up a procession of mixt maskers, among whom a couple of jack-o-lanterns were admirable. They were very neatly made, and as they turned and whisked about, they scattered gold-leaf and verses.

The distichs increase daily: they now amount to nearly two hundred. I send you the last number of the *Journal*

of *Fashion*, on account of the treatise, page 18, on the *Xenia*. Little does the author think that there is one in store for him for the next year. What poverty and want of tact these people exhibit! To give as specimens only two of such poems, and these so vilely translated! It is as if everything genial fled from this fire-colored binding.

I have obtained from Göttingen the treatise of Cellini on the work of goldsmiths and sculptors. As I am obliged to read and make extracts from it quickly, the little Biography will probably be thereby furthered. Farewell. My greeting to your dear wife.

I had nearly forgotten the best I had to say to you. I have received from Meyer a beautiful and excellent letter, which exhibits very distinctly his situation. Between his irrepressible disposition to do everything thoroughly, and at the same time with the minutest finish, and the immense quantity of subjects which he describes and criticises, together with the attractions of others that he would like to copy, he is in great straits. He asks me for advice, and I shall refer him back to his own genius.

In a letter to the Duchess Dowager there is an amusing passage on those artists who at present represent Kantish ideas in allegoric pictures. If it is anything more than persiflage, we have the oddest phenomenon that can be visible before the doomsday of art.

From your letter I learn for the first time that the monthly journals, *Germany* and *France*, have an editor. We have long known this false friend, and have been indulgent towards his general ill-conduct only because he paid regularly his particular tribute. So soon, however, as he gives indications of refusing this, we will send him a Bashaw with three burning fox-tails. A dozen distichs

are already appropriated to him, which will reach you, God willing, on Wednesday. In the meantime, once more, farewell.

WEIMAR, 30th January, 1795.

G.

CXLIX.

31st January, 1796.

I CONGRATULATE you on the success of the *fête* : it must have been a very pretty spectacle. The jack-o'-lanterns diverted me particularly.

Do bring Meyer's letters with you when you come over here. I am curious to see how by degrees the process of precipitation will take place in him, and his mind become clarified. As the account of the Kantish figures is only given in the letter to the Duchess, it is to be hoped that it is only a joke : so precious a piece of news he would no doubt have announced to you more distinctly.

You may rest assured that Reichardt is the editor of the journal *Germany*, and also that he (or the reviewer, which to us is all the same) takes great liberties with the *Conversations*, although he takes other opportunities in the same review to praise you with puffed cheeks. The production is indescribably wretched. Heinse's book, the notice of which I have since examined more closely, is strongly condemned, of which I am heartily sorry, as there is one folly the less to note down.

In the meanwhile a variety of ideas for our *Xenia* have disclosed themselves in me, which, however, are not yet quite ripe.

I think that if you come towards the end of this week, you will find a hundred or more ready. We must harass these good people in every allowable form, and even the

poetic interest requires a great variety within the limits of one strict law not to exceed a distich. Within a few days I have taken Homer in hand, and in the judgment he passes upon suitors I have discovered a glorious mine of parodies, which are already in part executed; some also I draw from the art of necromancy, wherewith to sting deceased authors, and here and there the living likewise. Reflect upon an introduction of Newton in the lower world: we must here also interlace our works into each other.

In the end I think we shall be able to make a comedy of epigrams. What think you?

My wife sends her best greetings to you. Do come as soon as you can.

SCH.

CL.

THE first transcript of the Xenia is at last finished, and I will send it immediately, as I cannot come to Jena before the 14th. They look very well together: it was, however, advisable to have a poetical vein flow through the whole collection. My last ones are, as you will find, very prosaic, which, seeing the principle of their composition, cannot well be otherwise.

I shall probably soon send you the seventh book of my Novel. I am now only working it up clean out of the first form in which I dictated it. What further will be to do on it will be seen when the eighth book shall be as far advanced as this, and we shall have thoroughly discussed the whole.

Within a few days I have received from Göttingen the work of Cellini, on the *Mechanical*, in various Arts. It is

excellently written, and the Preface as well as the work itself gives a fine insight into that extraordinary man. I have, therefore, gone to work again on his Life; but the difficulties of the treatment remain still the same. I will just begin by translating some interesting passages, and then see what further can be done. For the rest, according to my matter-of-fact mode of executing a Biography, the details are all in all; especially in the case of a private individual, where there are no results, the breadth and width of which would at any rate make an imposing show, and also in the case of an Artist, whose works—the permanent effects of his being, are not before our eyes. Nevertheless, I shall, perhaps, have a good quantity prepared before I go to see you, and then it will be more easy to determine what is to be done.

The first representation of the new Opera went off happily, and we have the approbation of the multitude; and really as a whole it makes a very pretty effect. The music is not deep, but agreeable; the dresses and decorations told very well. In a day or two I will send you the book, in order that you may see what a strange and ultra-German direction the stage is taking. Farewell, and greet your dear wife from me. My present way of life is too bustling and material even for the liveliest *realist*, and I hope soon to be out of it, and get into port with you.

WEIMAR, 4th February, 1796.

G.

CLI.

JENA, 5th February, 1796.

It does one's heart good to see how the collection of epigrams grows under our hands. I was glad to find several political ones among the new batch; for as we

shall certainly be confiscated in all unsafe regions, I don't see why we should not deserve it on this account also. You will find from forty to forty-two new ones by me : I keep back about eighty which belong together, and which are not yet quite ready. Reichardt is well taken care of, but he must be still better. He must be assailed as a musician, for he is there also not quite sound, and it is reasonable that he be pursued into his last hold, since he made war upon us on our legitimate territory.

I am very glad to hear that you propose to make a beginning on Cellini with detached passages. That is the best mode for you to get under way ; for where the subject admits of it, I hold it to be always better not to begin with the beginning, which is always the most difficult and the most barren.

* * * * *

At the prospect of some more of Meister, I rejoice as at a feast. Before we talk over the whole, I too must familiarize myself more with what is finished.

Koerner* writes me that he hopes to come at the end of May, and to spend a fortnight here, at which I am much rejoiced. I am sure that you also will be pleased at his stay here. As Schlegel is coming this spring, and Funk will probably pass a month here, I shall have a gay time of it. Farewell. My wife's best greetings.

SCH.

CLIV.

WOULD that you were not so much in want of the promised Elegies ! for I can't get done with them. For eight days past I have been engaged about them and in

* The father, I believe, of the poet.

consultation with Knebel: thus has the MS. got foul again, and will have to be re-copied. If a delay of eight days were possible, they should then be in good trim. I am sorely pressed still, by the Carnival, and in consequence of a fresh arrival of foreign Princes, our theatrical and other entertainments are disjointed and accumulated.

As I have nothing to furnish for the third number, I have been looking through my old papers, and have found among them some odd things, but mostly of a personal or ephemeral character, and therefore not available. To show at least how good my will is, I send herewith a very subjective journey in Switzerland. Determine yourself how much of it can be used: perhaps were a tale of passion invented to tack to it, it would do. This region has been a hundred times visited and described, still people continue to visit it and to read the descriptions of it. Tell me what you think. Of course whatever points out the individuals must be expunged.

Farewell. I look forward with longing to the moment when I shall see you again.

WEIMAR, 12th February, 1796.

G.

CLVIII.

JENA, 18th March, 1796.

SINCE your absence, I have been very tolerable, and shall be quite satisfied if I continue so during my visit to Weimar. I have been meditating on my Wallenstein, but have otherwise done no work. I hope yet to bring to light a few Xenia before the period of the note-worthy constellation.*

* A playful reference apparently to their meeting in Weimar.

The preparations for so intricate a work as a Drama is, set the mind in motion in a very extraordinary manner. Even the very first operation, the seeking of a certain method in the matter, in order that one's blows be not aimless, is no trifle. I am now upon the skeleton, and I find that in the dramatic structure as well as in the human, everything depends upon this. I should like to know how you go to work in such cases. With me the conception has at first no decided or distinct body: this forms itself only later. A certain musical mood arises first in my mind, and only after this follows the poetical idea.

According to a letter from C., Herder was to have been here to-day. I have, however, seen nothing of him.

Farewell. Here is Cellini, who was forgotten the day before yesterday. My wife greets you.

SCH.

CLX.

JENA, 21st April, 1796.

WE arrived here safely yesterday, but with the half of my soul I am still in Weimar. What good effect both physically and morally my visit there has had, I feel already, and no doubt it will show itself in deed and result.

Farewell. My wife's best regards. On Monday evening, intoxicated with the representation of Egmont, we shall see each other again.

SCH.

CLXIV.

MY hearty congratulations for the new arrival. May you live to have much joy in your two boys! Give my truest greetings to your dear wife.

If possible, I will come next Saturday to visit you. About the Novel we shall be obliged now to confer orally; also about the *Xenia* and several other matters which I have in my mind. Touching the former, the chief question will be, where the *Apprenticeship* properly ends, and in how far there is a purpose to make the personages reappear at a future period. Your letter, received to-day, hints at a continuation of the work, which accords with my own view and inclination; but of that orally. What is necessary for the completion of the past, must be *done*, and the future must be *indicated*; but indentations must be left, which, as well as the general plan, point to a continuation: on this point I wish to have a full talk with you. Send me nothing by the carrier-women, and retain the manuscript. I will bring with me the *Xenia*, Cellini, and perhaps other things. Greet Schlegel and his wife: I am glad that I shall this time see them both.

I have read with great interest Herder's two new volumes. The seventh particularly, seems to me admirably conceived, developed and written. The eighth, although containing so much that is excellent, does not make one feel right, nor did the author feel right when he wrote it. A certain reservedness, a certain circumspectness, a twisting and turning, a niggardly dealing out of praise and blame, makes what he says of German Literature particularly, very meager. It may be owing to my mood at the time, but it seems to me, that, as well in treating of writings as of actions, unless one speaks with a loving sympathy, a certain partial enthusiasm, the result is so defective as to have very little value. Pleasure, delight, sympathy in things, is all that is real, and that reproduces reality: all else is empty and in vain.

Farewell, and enjoy in your peaceful valley the fine weather, at least out of the window.

WEIMAR, 14th June, 1796.

G.

CLXVI.

JENA, 17th June, 1796.

I POSTPONE the answers to your welcome letter till Monday, and write this to tell you that this evening we expect Voss, who has already announced himself by a note. He can only remain one day, leaves us again early on Sunday, and does not go to Weimar.

He would like very much to meet you. It rests therefore with you, whether you will give him this pleasure, whereto we heartily invite you. He comes from Gibichenstein and probably brings Reichardt with him—a scene at the prospect of which I almost rejoiced. Farewell.

SCH.

It is nearly 10 o'clock at night, and Voss is not yet come; but I doubt not that he will.

CLXVII.

I AM very sorry that I shall not see Voss. One should by no means neglect to renew agreeable relations from time to time by personal intercourse. Unfortunately, I dare not just now suffer my mind to be diverted for a moment from my work: the Novel is in so prosperous a way that if it goes on at this rate, you will in eight days receive the eighth book, and then there were concluded a singular epoch under singular aspects.

Greet Voss very sincerely, and renew also in my name a relation, which from its nature can always improve.

Should another guest* be present, which I hope not, I send him the following offering :

Come thou from Gibichenstein or from Malepartus !

Thou art still no fox, thou 'rt only half bear and half wolf.

Farewell : greet your wife and Schlegel. I have much to say to you, and if I have good luck, I will put it soon into such forms that you will be able to use it for the *Horen* and Almanac. Adieu.

WEIMAR, 18th June, 1796.

G.

I was near forgetting to tell you that Richter is here. He is going to visit you with Knebel, and I am sure you will be pleased with him.

CLXVIII.

JENA, 18th June, 1796.

Voss is not yet here, at least I have as yet seen nothing of him. As I much doubt whether you will come, I will send off this letter, having a good opportunity.

The Idyl affected me as fully, nay more fully at the second reading than at the first. It is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful of your productions, such simplicity has it united with an unfathomable depth of sensibility. *

* * * * *

Herder's book made on me very much the impression it did on you, except that with this, as mostly with his writings, I lose always more of what I thought I possessed than I gain in new realities. By aiming ever to bind together and unite what others separate, he has the effect of disturbing rather than calming me. His irreconcilable hostility to rhyme is carried, I think, much too far, and

* Meaning Reichardt.

what he adduces against it, seems to me altogether insufficient. Be the origin of rhyme ever so common and unpoetical, one must still look to the impression it makes, and this is not to be reasoned away by any argument.

In his confessions about German literature, I am displeased not only with his coldness for what is good, but also with his strange tolerance for what is bad. He speaks with the same respect of a Nicolai, an Eschenburg, and others of that class, as of the most important authors; and in an extraordinary manner he throws the Stolbergs and myself, Kosegarten, and I don't know how many others, all into the same pot. His veneration for Kleist, Gerstensberg and Gessner, and generally for all who are dead and mouldered, is equal to his coldness towards the living. * * * *

Farewell. My wife's best greetings to you. Her health is much the same.

SCH.

CLXX.

I HAVE received your dear and valued letters, together with the biscuit, and as to-day my task at the Novel is finished early, I will dictate this letter in advance for to-morrow.

The eighth Book continues to make uninterrupted progress. And when one reflects on the concurring circumstances whereby what was almost impossible has been brought about in a perfectly natural way, one might almost become superstitious. So much is certain, that the long habit of availing myself at the moment of resources, accidental events, moods, and whatever of agreeable or disagreeable comes over one, stands me now in good

stead. Nevertheless, my hope to be able to send it to you next Saturday, seems to have been over-hasty.

Your poem, the *Complaint of Ceres*, has brought to my mind again various attempts I had made to verify by scientific proofs the idea you have taken up and handled so favorably. Some of the experiments were unexpectedly successful, and, as I foresee that during these fine summer months I shall be able to remain at home some time, I have already made arrangements for raising a number of plants in the dark, and will then compare the results with what is already known.

That Voss did not come, I don't like in him, particularly as you and he are not yet personally acquainted, as I learn from your letter. This is a kind of neglect and inattention, such as most of us when young will be guilty of; against which, however, one should as much as possible guard oneself, when one has come to know how to value men. Probably, however, Reichardt prevented him from coming; for it is evident enough that R. cannot be satisfied with his position in regard to us.

* * * * *

I am glad that on a closer inspection the Idyl holds its own. For the jealousy at the end, I have two reasons. One from Nature; because every unexpected and undeserved good fortune in love has always at its heels the fear of deprivation: and one from Art; because the Idyl has throughout a pathetic movement, and therefore the passionate character must increase in strength till towards the conclusion, when, by the parting bow of the poet, the poem is led back to the moderate and cheerful. So much in justification of the inexplicable instinct through which such things are produced.

Richter is so complicated a being, that I cannot take the time to tell you what I think of him. You must and will see him, and then we will discuss him together. Here he shares the same fate as his works : now he is rated too high, and now too low, and no one knows what to make of the singular creature.

Cellini* goes on bravely, and, as it suits our convenience, let us work the iron so long as it keeps warm. Let me know when you want another supply of it.

Herewith I send you a pasquil, which will lead you into a quite peculiar world, and which, though very uneven, contains some capital jokes, and berates wildly enough certain silly people, flatterers, cits and pedants. Let no one see it, and send it immediately back to me.

22d June, 1796.

G.

CLXXII.

* * * * *

You will receive the Novel the beginning of next week, through a special carrier, who can bring back the *Xenia* if you have them ready. Read the manuscript first with friendly enjoyment, and then critically, and acquit me if you can. Many passages ask for more finish, many require it, and yet I scarcely know what to do ; for the demands which this eighth Book makes upon me are endless, and ought not, according to the nature of the thing, to be fully satisfied, although everything should to a certain degree be cleared up. My whole trust is in your requisitions and your justification. The manuscript has

* The autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, the translation of which, by Goëthe, first appeared in the *Horen*.

swelled under my hands, and if I had wished to be more diffuse, and had poured in more of the water of reasoning, I might very conveniently have made out of this last volume two : may then its effect in its condensed form be better and more enduring !

Farewell, and greet your wife from me, and write me soon how you both are.

WEIMAR, 25th June, 1796.

G.

CLXXIV.

27th June.

HEARTY thanks for the package. It finds me in a cheerful mood, and I hope to enjoy it with my whole soul.

The taking leave of a long and important work is always more sad than joyful. The stretched faculties relapse too quickly, and the mind cannot immediately fix itself on a new subject. The best for you now would be to have something to *act*, and work upon a living material.

I send by the carrier as many of the *Xenia* as are ready. I have left about eighty, which the carrier-girl shall take. To these, which are all friendly, I am just now busy in adding some new ones, which a happy mood has offered me. Upon the whole, I am in hopes that the conclusion will not be bad. Among those herewith sent, you will find about a hundred new acquaintances, and will miss some old ones. Why these latter have been omitted, I will tell you orally. Strike out without forbearance, all that are on any account objectionable to you. Our provision will bear a severe choice.

In order to increase the number of the poetical and friendly *Xenia*, I wish I could be the means of making you take a range through the best *antiques* and the beau-

tiful Italian paintings. These forms live in your soul, and a propitious mood would furnish you a fine thought on each one of them. They are the more suitable material, from their individuality.

Farewell. Rejoice in life and your work. Who in the world has more cause for joy?

My wife greets you heartily, and is full of curiosity about the eighth Book.

SCH.

CLXXV.

EXPECT from me to-day nothing definitive as to the impression which the eighth Book has made on me. I am disturbed and I am satisfied. Longing and repose are strangely mingled. Out of the mass of impressions which I have received, the most prominent at this moment is the image of Mignon. Whether this so strongly interested feeling is stronger than it ought to be, I am not yet able to say. It may be moreover accidental, for, on opening the manuscript, my eye fell first on the song, and this affected me so deeply, that I could not afterwards remove the impression.

In the total effect, this seems to me most worthy of note; that earnestness and sorrow sink everywhere like a play of shadows, and over them light humor gets full mastery. This is partly explicable from the soft and light execution; I think, however, I discern another reason for it in the theatrical and romantic bringing together and relative disposition of the incidents. The pathetic calls to mind the Novel, all else the truth of life. The most painful blows the heart receives are soon forgotten, however sharply they be felt, because they were brought about

by something wonderful, and on this account remind one the quicker of Art. Be it as it will, this much is certain, that in the Novel earnestness is merely sport, and sport the only real earnestness ; that pain is appearance, and repose the only reality.

Frederick, who is so wisely laid up in store, who, at the end, by his turbulence, shakes from the tree the ripe fruit, and blows together what belongs together, appears at the catastrophe just like one who wakes us out of an uneasy dream by laughing. The dream flees to the other shadows, but its image remains, to impart a higher spirit to the present, and a poetical consistency, an infinite depth, to the repose and cheerfulness. This depth, united with a calm surface, which is generally so peculiar to you, is an eminent feature of the present Novel.

But I will not permit myself to say more to-day, however strong my impulse to do so ; for I could not yet give you anything mature. If you could send me the first plan of the seventh Book, whereof a copy was made for Unger,* it would be very serviceable to me in following the whole in all its details. Although it is still fresh in my memory, some fine threads of connection may have escaped me.

I perceive very clearly how admirably this eighth Book connects itself with the sixth, and how much is gained by the anticipation of the last. I would not desire any other arrangement of the story than just this. We have known the family so long before it really appears, that we seem to take up an acquaintanceship without a beginning : it is a kind of optical stroke of art that has an excellent effect.

* A publisher.

What capital use you have made of the Grandfather's Collection of Pictures: it plays the part of a real personage, and is like a living thing.

But, enough for to-day. On Saturday, I hope to say more to you.

Farewell. Hearty greetings from my wife, who is just now deep in the Novel.

I have not yet written you aught of Hesperus.* I found him pretty much as I expected him; strange, as one fallen out of the moon, full of good will, and heartily disposed to see things around him, only not with the organ with which one sees. However, I had but one conversation with him, and can therefore as yet say little of him.

JENA, 28th June, 1796.

SCH.

CLXXVI.

HEARTILY rejoiced am I that we have at last reached this epoch, and that your first utterance on the eighth Book has reached me. Of inestimable value to me is your testimony, that on the whole I have produced what is conformable to my nature, and also conformable to the nature of the work. Herewith I send the seventh Book, and shall zealously set to work again on the eighth so soon as I shall know more fully your opinions.

For about eight days my time will be consumed by outward occupations, which is very well, for in the end, what with so much fiction, oneself would turn into a fable. After that, the *Xenia*, Cellini and the Novel, shall share amongst them what is left of July. I have almost adopted your mode of life, and scarcely go out of the house.

* Richter, thus designated after one of his novels.

I am glad that you have seen Richter: his love of truth, and his desire to improve himself, interested me in him. But the jovial man is a kind of theoretical being, and when I reflect on it, I doubt whether Richter will ever approach us in practice, although his theoretical views would seem to promise it.

Farewell, and let us write much to one another this next month, for what is to be accomplished requires much encouragement.

WEIMAR, 29th June, 1796.

G.

CLXXVIII.

JENA, 2d July, 1796.

I HAVE now gone through again, though rapidly, all the eight Books of the Novel, whereof the quantity alone is so great that it occupied me two days. Properly, therefore, I ought not to write about it to-day; for the surprising and unparalleled variety that is, in the strictest sense, concealed in it, overwhelms me. I acknowledge that, as yet, although the *continuity* of it is clear to my mind, the *unity* is not: I doubt not however in the least that it will be; and, indeed, in works of this class, continuity constitutes more than half of the unity.

As under these circumstances you cannot expect from me anything fully satisfactory, and yet desire to have something, you must be content with remarks put together without method, which, however, will not be entirely without value, inasmuch as they will give you my present impressions. A worthy and truly *æsthetic* estimate of the whole work, as a work of art, is a great undertaking. The coming four months I shall devote to it entirely, and

with delight. Meanwhile, I account it the most fortunate incident of my existence, that I have lived to see the completion of this work ; that this has taken place while my faculties are still capable of improvement ; that I can yet draw from this pure spring ; and the beautiful relation there is between us makes it a kind of religion with me to feel towards what is yours as if it were my own, and so to purify and elevate my nature that my mind may be a clear mirror, and that I may thus deserve, in a higher sense, the name of your friend. How strongly have I felt on this occasion that the Excellent is a power ; that by selfish natures it can be felt only as a power ; and that only where there is disinterested love can it be enjoyed.

I cannot describe to you how deeply the truth, the beautiful vitality, the simple fulness of this work, has affected me. The excitement into which it has thrown my mind will subside when I shall have perfectly mastered it, and that will be an important crisis in my being. This excitement is the effect of the Beautiful, and only the Beautiful, and proceeds thence, that my intellect is not yet entirely in accordance with my feelings. I understand now perfectly what you mean when you say that it is strictly the Beautiful, the True, that can move you even to tears. Tranquil and deep, clear, and yet like nature unintelligible, is this work ; and all, even the most trivial collateral incident, shows the clearness, the equanimity of the mind whence it flowed.

But I cannot yet give fit expression to my impressions, and shall therefore confine myself to the eighth Book. How did you succeed in drawing together again so closely the large and widely separated circle and scene of action of persons and events ? The work is like a planetary sys-

tem : all is bound together, and the Italian personages,—like comets, and as fearfully as these,—unite the system to a more remote and a greater one. These personages, too, as well as Marianna and Aurelia, run out of the system, and separate themselves from it as existences foreign to it, after they have served only to give to it a poetical movement. How beautifully conceived it is, to derive the *practically* monstrous, the fearfully pathetic, in the fate of Mignon and the Harper, from the *theoretically* monstrous, from the abortions of the understanding, so that nothing is thereby laid to the charge of pure and healthy Nature ! Superstition alone gives birth to the horrid fates that pursue Mignon and the Harper. Even Aurelia is ruined only through her masculine character, her unnaturalness.

Wilhelm's aberration to Teresa is admirably conceived, originated, executed, and still more admirably turned to account. Many a reader will be at first alarmed at it, for I anticipate few well-wishers to Teresa ; the more perfectly do you rescue him from his disquietude. I cannot conceive how this false relation could have been dissolved more tenderly, delicately and nobly. How the Richardsons and others would have delighted to make a scene out of it, and in the display of delicate sentiments have been downright indelicate ! I have only one little doubt in connection with it : Teresa's bold and determined opposition to the party that wishes to rob her of her lover, even though the possibility is thereby re-opened to her of possessing Lothario, is perfectly natural and excellent ; also, that Wilhelm manifests a deep indignation and a certain pain at the vexations of men and of fate, I think well-founded ;—only, it seems to me, he should complain less

of the loss of what had already begun to cease being a piece of good fortune for him. By the side of Natalia, it seems to me, his re-acquired liberty ought to be a higher good than he shows. I feel fully the complicated nature of this situation, and what delicacy demanded, but on the other hand it offends in some degree the delicacy due to Natalia that he is still inclined, having obtained her, to lament the loss of a Teresa.

What I particularly admire in the concatenation of the incidents, is the skilful use you have made of the false relation of Meister to Teresa, in order the more speedily to reach the true and desired aim, the union of Natalia and Meister. This course, which threatened to lead from the wished-for end, is the very one to bring it about most becomingly and naturally. Now it may be pronounced with the highest degree of propriety and purity that Wilhelm and Natalia belong the one to the other, and the letters of Teresa to Natalia prepare the way for it most aptly. Contrivances of this kind are of the highest beauty, for they reconcile all that it is desirable to reconcile, nay, what appears almost irreconcilable ; they entangle and carry within themselves the solution, they at once disturb and lead to repose, they reach the end while they seem to be forcibly bearing you from it.

Mignon's death, though we are so well prepared for it, has a powerful and deep effect, so deep, that to many you will seem to quit it too soon. At the first reading this was my very strongly impressed feeling ; at the second, where there was no longer surprise, this impression was weaker ; still, however, I fear that you may here have gone a hair's-breadth too far. Just before this catastrophe Mignon has begun to appear more developed and more womanly, and

thereby to be for her own sake more interesting : the repulsive heterogeneity of her being had relaxed, and with the relaxation had subsided that forbidding impetuosity of her nature. Especially did that last song melt the heart into the deepest emotion. It appears, therefore, odd, when immediately after the exciting scene of her death, the physician makes an experiment upon her corpse, and can so quickly forget this animated being, in order to regard her as the instrument of an artistic trial ; it seems equally singular that Wilhelm, who is, too, the cause of her death, and who also knows it, should at such a moment have eyes for that bag of instruments, and be able to lose himself in the recollection of past scenes, while the present should possess him wholly.

Should you be able to justify yourself entirely in the case towards Nature, I yet doubt whether you will be able to do so towards the "sentimental" requisitions of readers, and therefore I would advise you to have some regard to this, in order not to injure by aught the impression on the reader of a scene so wonderfully prepared and executed.

Everything else relating to Mignon, whether alive or dead, strikes me as uncommonly fine. How admirably suited is this pure and beautiful being to this poetical funeral ! In her isolated condition, her mysterious existence, her purity and her innocence, she represents so purely the period of life on which she has just entered, that she excites the most unmixed melancholy and a thoroughly human sorrow, because naught but humanity was manifested in her. What in the case of any other individual would be imperfect, nay revolting, becomes here sublime and noble.

I should like to have had the appearance of the Mar-

quis in the family brought about by something else than his love of the Arts. By the organization of the whole you have yourself spoilt the reader, and justified him in making severer demands than one is generally authorized to make in novels. Could not this Marquis be made an old acquaintance of Lothario or the uncle, and his journey thither be woven more into the whole ?

The catastrophe, as well as the whole history of the Harper, awakens the deepest interest. I have already mentioned how admirable I think it, that you deduce the horrible fate of the Harper and Mignon from religious extravagance. The idea of the Confessor, to paint a slight transgression as something monstrous, in order to obtain expiation for a great crime which he conceals out of humanity, is heavenly in its kind, and is a worthy representative of this whole way of thinking. Perhaps you could shorten a little Sperate's story, as it falls near the end, when one gets more impatient.

That the Harper is Mignon's father, and that you yourself do not directly declare it, do not thrust it on the reader, produces the more effect. One makes one's own reflections on it, recollects how near together those two mysterious beings lived, and looks down into an unfathomable abyss of fate.

But nothing more for to-day. My wife incloses a note, and tells you the impressions made on her by the eighth Book.

Now farewell, my dear, my honored friend. How it moves me to think that what we seek and scarcely find in the far distance of a favored antiquity, is to me present in you ! Be surprised no longer that there are so few capable and worthy of understanding you. The wonderful natural-

ness, truth, and lightness of your descriptions precludes, in the common herd of judges, all thought of the difficulty, the greatness of Art ; and upon those who are able to understand the artist, who perceive the means with which he works, the genial power which they see in action, operates with such a hostile, annihilating effect, compresses their barren self into so small a compass, that they angrily thrust the work from them ; yet in their hearts, though *de mauvaise grace*, they are your liveliest worshippers.

SCH.

CLXXIX.

JENA, 3d July, 1796.

I HAVE now well weighed in all its bearings Wilhelm's conduct on the loss of Teresa, and take back all my scruples. Just as it is, it must be. You have shown therein the highest delicacy, without in the slightest degree violating truth of feeling.

It is wonderful how beautifully and truly discriminated are the three characters of the *Canoness*, *Natalia*, and *Teresa*. The first two are saints, the last two are genuine human beings ; but on this very account, that Natalia is at once holy and human, does she appear as an angel, while the Canoness is merely a saint and Teresa entirely earthly. Natalia and Teresa are both realists ; but in Teresa is exhibited also the contractedness of realism ; in Natalia only its solidity. How fine it is that Natalia has no knowledge of love as an affection, as something exclusive and particular, because love is her nature, her permanent character ! Nor does the Canoness know properly what love is, but from an entirely different cause.

If I have rightly understood you, it is by no means

without design that you make Natalia pass from the conversation about love, and her own inexperience of this passion, directly into the Hall of the Past. The mood produced by this Hall is precisely that to lift one above all passion: the repose of beauty takes possession of the soul, and this gives the best key to Nature's nature, so free from love, and yet so full of love.

This Hall of the Past unites the æsthetic world, the realm of shadows in the ideal sense, in a noble manner with the living and real; as generally, whenever you introduce works of art, they combine admirably with the whole. It is so glad and free a step out of the constrained and narrow Present, and yet reconducts us back to it so beautifully. The transition likewise to the middle Sarcophagus, to Mignon, and to the real story, is of the highest effect. The inscription, *think how to live* [gedenke zu leben], is admirable, and is the more so, because it calls to mind the detestable *memento mori*, and triumphs over it beautifully.

The uncle, with his singular idiosyncrasies for certain natural objects, is highly interesting. Precisely such natures have so marked an individuality and so full a measure of susceptibility as the uncle must possess, in order to be what he is. His remarks on music, and that it ought to address itself purely to the ear, are also full of truth. It is evident that into this character you have put more of your own nature than into any other.

Of all the leading characters, Lothario stands out the least prominently, but for wholly objective reasons. A character like this can never wholly appear in the *medium* through which the poet works. No single act or speech exhibits him; one must see him, hear him, live with him.

Therefore it is enough, that those who live with him are unanimous in their confidence in him and high regard; that the women all love him, who always judge from the total impression; and that our attention is directed to the sources of his culture. With this character much more is left to the imagination of the reader than with the others, and most properly; for he is *æsthetic*, he must therefore be produced by the reader himself, yet not arbitrarily, but according to laws which you have given with sufficient precision. Nothing but his approximation to the ideal is the cause, that this precision of features can never turn into sharpness.

Jarno remains true to himself to the end, and his choice in regard to Lydia puts the crown upon his character. How skilfully you dispose of your women! Characters like Wilhelm and Lothario can only be happy through union with beings that harmonize with themselves; a person like Jarno can only be so with one in contrast with himself. He must have ever something to do and to think about, and to discriminate.

The good Countess does not fare the best at the final poetical account; but here also what you have done is perfectly consistent with Nature. A character like this can never be set up upon itself; for it, there is no development that could guarantee to it its repose and happiness; it remains always in the power of circumstances, and thence a kind of negative condition is all that can be obtained for it. That is, to be sure, not very agreeable for the beholder, but it is so, and the artist in this case only gives utterance to the law of Nature. Speaking of the Countess, I must remark, that her appearance in the eighth Book does not seem to me to be sufficiently accounted for. She comes *to the dénouement*, but not *out of it*.

The Count sustains his character admirably, and this also I must praise, that for the misfortune of the Harper, you make him blameable through his so well-contrived arrangements in the house. With all their love of order, such pedants must always create disorder.

The perversity of little Felix in drinking out of the bottle, which has afterwards so important a result, belongs also to the happiest ideas of the plot. There are several incidents of this kind in the Novel, which are all fine inventions. They unite in so simple and natural a manner the indifferent to the important and the reverse, and melt together the necessary and the accidental. -

I very much enjoyed Werner's melancholy transformation. A plodder like him could be lifted aloft for awhile only by youth, and by his consorting with Wilhelm; so soon as these two angels quit him, he falls, as is right and reasonable, to his congenial element, and is obliged to be at last himself astonished at the distance he has remained behind his friend. This personage is also on this account so salutary to the whole, because it unfolds and ennobles *realism*, to which you bring back the hero of the Novel. At present he stands on a fine middle ground, equally distant from the fantastical and the prosaic, and you have at once cured him most fully of the disposition to the first and impressively warned him against the latter.

Herewith I send back Humboldt's letter. Much of what he says of the Idyl is true, parts of it he does not seem to have felt as I feel it. The trifles which he condemns lose themselves in the beautiful whole; nevertheless, it were perhaps well to give some attention to them, and his reasons are not to be rejected. Two trochees in the foremost hemi-pentameter do make the verse drag somewhat,

and this holds, too, of the other passages. The antithesis between *for* one another and *to* one another, is a little too marked, if one takes it strictly; and one likes always to be strict with you.

Farewell. I have written a pretty long epistle: may you read as willingly as I wrote!

SCH.

CLXXX.

JENA, 5th July, 1796.

Now that I have the whole work before my mind, I cannot sufficiently express how happily you have chosen the character of the hero, if in such a case there could be a choosing. None other were so well fitted to be the *carrier* of the incidents; and leaving entirely out of view that only on such a character could the problem be proposed and solved, even for the mere presentation of the whole, no other would have suited so well. Not only did the subject require this particular character, the reader also needed it.

His tendency to reflection makes the reader pause in the most rapid movement of the active, and obliges him to look ever forwards and backwards, and to meditate on all that occurs. He gathers in, so to speak, the spirit, the sense, the inward contents of everything that passes round him, converts each indistinct feeling into an idea, a thought, utters each particular in a general formula, interprets to us the significance of everything, and while he thereby fulfils his own character, he fulfils at the same time most perfectly the aim of the whole.

The rank and outward position from which you selected him makes him especially well fitted for this. A new world is opened to him, which makes a lively impression

on him, and while he is busy in assimilating the same to himself, he leads us, too, into its interior, and shows us what there is therein of reality for man. In him resides a pure and moral image of humanity ; by this he tests each outward appearance of the same, and while on the one hand experience helps to give fixedness to his fluctuating ideas, this very idea, this inward feeling, rectifies on the other hand again experience. In this way this character helps you wonderfully, in all the events and relations that occur, to discover and interpret the essentially human. His mind is, indeed, a true but yet no mere passive mirror of the world, and although his fancy has an influence on his perception, yet is this latter only ideal, not fantastic ; poetic, not extravagant. It has for a foundation not the caprice of the wayward imagination, but a beautiful moral freedom.

Beyond measure, truly and strikingly does his discontent picture him, when he gives to Teresa the history of his life. His worth lies in his mind, not in what he has done ; in his striving, not in his acts ; thence must his life, so soon as he wishes to give account thereof to another, appear to himself so empty. On the other hand, a Teresa, and similar characters, can always count their worth in ready coin, always vouch it through an outward object. That you, however, give Teresa a sense and appreciation of that higher nature is again a beautiful and delicate trait of character. In her clear soul there must be capacity to reflect that which she has not in herself, whereby you raise her at once above those limited beings who cannot even in idea pass beyond their barren selves. That finally, a mind like Teresa's believes in a mode of viewing things and of feeling so foreign to herself, that she loves

and respects the heart that is capable of it, is an admirable testimony in favor of the objective reality of the mode itself, which must delight every reader.

I was also glad to find in the eighth Book, that Wilhelm begins to feel himself more opposite to those two imposing authorities, Jarno and the Abbé. This is a proof that he has pretty well finished his apprenticeship, and Jarno answers on this occasion perfectly in accordance with my feeling: "You are sharp; that is well and good: if you will only once get right savage, 'twill be still better." I acknowledge that without this manifestation of self-reliance, I should feel uncomfortable at seeing our hero connected so closely with this class, as he comes to be afterwards through the union with Natalia. What with his lively feeling of the advantages of nobility, and his honest distrust of himself and his condition, which he discloses on so many occasions, he does not seem to be fully qualified to be able to maintain in this relation a perfect freedom; and even now, when you show him bolder and more self-relying, one cannot rid oneself of a certain anxiety about him. Will he ever be able to forget the *bourgeois*, and must he not, if his destiny is to be completely fulfilled? I fear he will never entirely forget it; he has meditated thereon too much; what he has once seen so distinctly out of himself, he will never be able fully to take into himself. Lothario's superior nature, as well as Natalia's two-fold merit, of birth and heart, will always keep him in a certain inferiority. When at the same time I think of him as the brother-in-law of the Count, who does not temper the elevation of his rank by anything æsthetic, but rather aggravates it by pedantry, I cannot but feel sometimes anxious for him.

For the rest, it is admirable how, with all becoming respect for certain outward positive forms, the moment there is to do with anything purely human, you thrust back birth and rank into their utter nothingness, and that, too, as is proper, without expending a word on the matter. But what I look upon as an obvious beauty, you scarcely find generally approved of. It will strike many as strange, that a novel, not in the least *sans-culottish*, but which, on the contrary, in several passages seems to say a good word for aristocracy, ends with three marriages, which are all three *mésalliances*. As I do not wish that in the *dénouement* aught should be other than it is, and yet do not like to see the true spirit of the work misunderstood even in trifles and casual circumstances, I suggest to you, whether it were not well to counteract this false judgment by a few words put into Lothario's mouth. I say into Lothario's mouth, for he is the aristocratic character. He will have the most authority with readers of his class; in his case, too, the *mésalliance* is the most glaring. At the same time this would afford an opportunity which does not occur often, to exhibit Lothario's completed character. I do not mean that this should take place at the point where the reader has to apply it; on the contrary, it were so much the better if it came from Lothario as the natural utterance of his mind, independent of any application, and not as a rule for a single case.

Nothing further to-day. You have now heard a great deal from me of one kind or other, and will hear still more. May there be something in it which will be serviceable to you!

A happy farewell to you.

SCH.

CLXXXI.

IMMEDIATELY after I received your first letter, I began to write to you something about it : now, in the midst of my utterly earthly occupations, come suddenly upon me your two other letters, truly as voices from another world, to which I can do naught but listen. Go on refreshing and encouraging me. Through your thoughts and opinions you put me in a condition to complete the eighth Book whenever I shall take hold of it again. I have the means to satisfy nearly all your wants, through which on the very points whereon you have doubts the whole becomes to my mind more compact, true, and sightly. Do not tire of telling me fully your mind, and keep the eighth Book a week longer. In the mean time I will get forward with what you want of Cellini. I will write to you only summarily what I design yet to do to the eighth Book, and thus will the last copy be ready to go out of our hands by the beginning of August.

Your letters are at present my sole recreation, and you will be able to feel how thankful I am to you that you at once put me at ease on so many points. Farewell, and greet your dear wife.

WEIMAR, 5th July, 1796.

G.

CLXXXIII.

JENA, 8th July, 1796.

As you can let me keep the eighth Book a week longer, I will confine my present remarks to this Book. When the whole is out of your hands in the wide world, we can then occupy ourselves more about the form of the whole, and then you will do me on my side the service to rectify my judgment.

Two points there are especially to which I would call your attention before the final closing of the Book.

This Novel resembles in several respects the Epopee, among others in this, that it has machinery, which, in a certain sense, represents in it the gods, or governing fate. The subject required this.

Meister's apprenticeship is no mere blind effect of Nature ; it is a kind of experiment. A concealed, active, higher understanding, the powers of the Tower, accompany him with their watchfulness, and without disturbing Nature in her free movement, they observe and lead him from a distance and to an end, whereof he has not and should not have a surmise. Quiet and gentle as is this influence from without, it nevertheless exists, and to the attainment of the poetical aim it was indispensable. Apprenticeship implies relation ; it requires its co-relative mastership ; and, indeed, the idea of the latter is needed to explain and furnish a basis to the former. But this idea of mastership, which is only the work of Nature and completed experience, cannot itself lead the Hero of the Novel ; it cannot and should not stand before him as his end and aim, for so soon as he should have in view the end, it were thereby attained ; it must therefore stand *behind* him as guide. In this way there is throughout the whole a beautiful subordination to an aim, without the Hero himself having an aim ; the understanding thus finds a business accomplished, while the imagination fully maintains its freedom.

But that, with this aim, the only one in the whole Novel that is really declared, and even with this secret guiding of Wilhelm by Jarno and the Abbé, you avoided all heaviness and hardness, and that you had derived the motive

for it rather from a whim than from a moral source, is one of the most striking of those beauties that are peculiar to yourself! The *idea* of a machinery is thereby suppressed, while at the same time its agency continues, and everything remains, as regards form, within the bounds of Nature; only the result is more than mere Nature left to itself could have produced.

With all this, however, I still wish that you had made a little more apparent to the reader the important part of the machinery; viz., its necessary bearing upon the internal character of the work. The reader should always be able to look clearly into the economy of the whole, although, from the acting personages themselves, this ought to remain concealed. Many readers, I fear, will think they see in that secret influence merely a theatrical play, and an artifice to add to the intricacy of the plot, to excite surprise, &c. The eighth Book, it is true, gives an *historical* explanation of all incidents brought about by the machinery, but it does not give satisfactorily enough the *æsthetic* explanation of the inward spirit, the poetical necessity of those contrivances: even I myself only became convinced of this necessity at the second and third reading.

It were then a question, whether this fault, if it is a fault, could not still be obviated in the eighth Book. Moreover, it concerns only the development of the idea; in the idea itself there is naught to wish changed. It is only, therefore, necessary to give a little more importance in the eyes of the reader to that which hitherto he treated too frivolously, and by more distinctly connecting with the most serious import of the Poem those theatrical incidents, which he might look upon as a mere play of the imagination, justify them to the Reason, as is done most *implicitly*.

but not *explicitly*. The Abbé seems to me well fitted to be charged with this duty, and he will thereby have an opportunity further to recommend himself. Perhaps it were not superfluous to mention in the eighth Book the immediate occasion of Wilhelm's being made an object of the Abbé's pedagogic plans. These plans would thereby receive a more special reference, and Wilhelm personally would appear to the circle to be of more consequence.

In the eighth Book you have dropt various hints of what you wish understood by Apprenticeship and by Mastership. As the purport of a work of fiction is the main consideration, especially with a public like ours, and is often the only thing afterwards recollected, it is of importance that you be here fully understood. The hints are excellent, only they do not seem to me sufficient. You wish the reader himself to discover more than you directly impart to him. But precisely because you do give out something will it be thought that this is all, and thus you will have limited your idea more than if you had left it entirely to the reader to find out.

If I had to express in so many words the goal which Wilhelm has finally reached after so many aberrations, I should say: "He enters from an empty and undefined Ideal into a defined actual life, but without thereby forfeiting the idealizing power." The two opposite paths that lead away from this happy condition are exhibited in the Novel, and that in all possible shades and degrees. From that unfortunate expedition, where he wishes to construct a play without having thought of its contents, down to the moment when he chooses Teresa for his wife, he has, as it were, run through in a one-sided way the whole circle of humanity: those two extremes are the two greatest

contrasts of which a character like his is capable. That he now, under the beautiful and glad guidance of Nature (through Felix), passes over from the ideal to the real, from lively endeavor to action and a recognition of the actual, without, however, losing what was real in that first state of endeavor, that he learns to confine himself within limits, but in these limits themselves finds again the passage to the infinite, &c.; this I call the crisis of his life, the end of his apprenticeship, and to this all the contrivances in the work tend most perfectly. The beautiful, natural relation to his child, and the union with so elevated a woman as Natalia, guaranty this state of spiritual health, and we part from him on a path which tends to an endless perfection.

Now, the manner in which you express yourself as to the idea to be attached to *Apprenticeship* and *Mastership*, seems to set a narrower limit to both. Under the first you understand merely the error of seeking out of oneself that which the inward man himself must yield; under the second, the conviction of the inwardness of that search, of the necessity of self-development, &c. But does this idea entirely embrace and exhaust the whole life of Wilhelm as this lies before us in the Novel? Is everything intelligible by means of this formula? And is it enough for his emancipation from the first state that the father's heart has disclosed itself, as happens at the end of the seventh Book? What I would therefore desire is this, that the bearing of all the parts of the work upon that philosophical idea be made somewhat more apparent. I might say, the Fable is perfectly true, the moral of the Fable is also perfectly true; but the relation of one to the other is not quite obvious enough.

I do not know whether in these comments I have been able to make myself perfectly intelligible: the question relates to the whole, and it is therefore difficult to expound it by particular references. A hint, however, is here sufficient.

Before you send me the copy of the *Xenia*, have the goodness to strike out what you wish omitted, and to underscore what you wish changed. I can then the sooner take my measures for what is still to be done.

May there be the mood and the time for the little poems you proposed to furnish to the Almanac, and to the poem of Mignon which we already have in *petto*! The lustre of the Almanac depends entirely upon your contributions. I now live and work again in Criticism, in order to make Meister quite clear to me, and cannot do much more for the Almanac. Then comes the confinement of my wife, which will not be favorable to the poetical mood. She sends her hearty regards to you. Farewell. On Sunday evening I hope to write to you again.

SCH.

Will you have the goodness to get for me out of the library at Weimar the fifth volume of the large Muratori Collection?

CLXXXIV.

At the same time that I note on a separate sheet, the particular passages which I propose to alter and fill up according to your suggestions, I have to give you my warmest thanks for compelling me, by the admonitions contained in your letter of to-day, to direct my attention to the adequate completion of the whole. I beg you not to desist from, I may say, driving me out of my own limits.

The fault which you so justly remark upon, has its source in the depths of my nature, in a certain feeling through which I find a satisfaction in veiling from the world's eyes my existence, my actions, my writings. Thus I like to travel incognito, to choose the worse instead of the better apparel, and in conversation with strangers or half-acquaintances to prefer a subject of little importance or at any rate the less important expression, to deport myself with more levity than is natural to me, and thus to place myself, as it were, between myself and the manifestation of myself. You know very well, partly how it is, and partly whence it is.

After this general confession I will pass very gladly to the particular one, that, but for your instigation, I should, against both knowledge and conscience, have abandoned myself to this peculiarity in this Novel, which, considering the very great expenditure that has been made on it, would have been unpardonable, inasmuch as all that can be required is at once so easy to discern, and so convenient to supply.

Thus, to announce in direct terms the early direction of the Abbé's attention upon Wilhelm, would throw a quite natural and spiritual light upon the whole, and yet I neglected to do it; scarcely even could I make up my mind to tell through Werner, something favorable of his outward condition.

I had cut short in the seventh Book the Apprentice's indenture, in which, thus far, one reads only a few maxims about Art. The second half was to contain certain important sentences relating to Life, and I had the fairest opportunity, through a verbal commentary of the Abbé, to explain and vindicate the incidents generally, but particu-

larly those brought about by the Powers of the Tower, and thus to save that machinery from the suspicion of being nothing but a cold and meaningless resource of the Novel-writer, and to give it an æsthetic value, or, more properly, to make obvious its æsthetic value. You see that I concur entirely with your views.

There is no doubt that the apparent results, those declared by me, are not at all in proportion to the contents of the work, and I seem to myself like one who, after having set down one over the other a number of large figures, wantonly makes mistakes in the addition, in order, from some unaccountable whim, to diminish the total sum.

I owe you for this, as for so much else, the heartiest thanks, that you have called my attention in so decided a way, and while it is still not too late, to this perverse manner of execution, and I shall certainly, in so far as I can, comply with your just wishes. I have only to distribute the contents of your letter at the appropriate places, and that alone would set the matter right. And should it still happen (for human perversity is a most insurmountable obstacle) that, after all, I be unable to get delivered of the important sentences, I beseech you, with some bold pencil strokes, to add with your own hand that which I, from the strangest tyranny of nature, am incapable of uttering. Go on during this week reminding and animating me; I will in the meanwhile provide for Cellini, and if possible for the Almanac.

WEIMAR, 9th July, 1796.

G.

CLXXXVI.

I SEND back to you the *Xenia* with my criticisms: the serious and well-meaning ones are now in such force, that one begrudges the ragamuffins who are assailed, that they are mentioned in such good company.

Touching the portrait,* I do not see how we shall manage it. There is no one here who could copy it for this purpose. To send the original to Berlin would be unsafe; moreover, Bolt is, I think, though an agreeable, by no means a thorough artist. How would it do to postpone your friendly purpose until Meyer's return? From him we might expect something in every respect good.

Greet your dear wife. Could you not, in case of an increase of your family, send Charles over here? Augustus would give him a hearty welcome, and he would be very happy in the company of the many children that assemble in my house and garden. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 9th July, 1796.

G.

CLXXXVIII.

Monday Afternoon, 3 o'clock.

THE confinement of my wife took place two hours ago, in a shorter time than was expected, and with Starke's assistance, easily and happily. My wishes are in every respect fulfilled, for it is a boy, apparently lively and strong. You can conceive what a load is taken from my heart, especially as I had cause to fear the spasms might make the birth premature.

I can now, therefore, begin to count my little family;

* An engraving of his portrait which Schiller wished to have for the Almanac.

it is a peculiar sensation, and the step from one to two is much greater than I thought.

Farewell. My wife greets you; she is, bating weakness, doing very well.

SCH.

CXC

I CAME over rapidly yesterday in Counsellor Loder's company. The copying of the Novel goes on briskly. This morning early I excogitated a little treatise, by which I expect to be able to give to you and myself a clear account of my method of observing nature, out of which hereafter can be made an Introduction to this class of my works. Herewith I send you one of Nature's products, which at this season must be consumed quickly. I hope it may taste well and agree with you.

WEIMAR, 20th July, 1796.

G.

CXCI.

ONLY a few lines by way of greeting, and to give you our best thanks for the fish which we relished very much, namely, my mother-in-law, and myself, and the Schlegels, whom we invited to partake of it.

I am so exhausted and fatigued, by a despatch to Cotta, and a variety of trifling matters, that I cannot write more to-day. I hope the events in Frankfort have not fallen, and will not fall hard on you and your mother. If you hear of anything concerning these occurrences, which does not appear in the newspapers, let me have information of it. Farewell.

10 o'clock in the evening.

SCH.

It was reported here to-day that the Coadjutor was taken prisoner.

CXCIV.

JENA, 25th July, 1796.

THESE last few days I have not felt well enough to write to you of aught that interests us. I refrain also to-day, for my head is in a sad state, from a sleepless night.

Political matters, which I have always from choice avoided, are coming gradually closer and closer home to me.

* * * * *

I lately heard that Stolberg, and others who happened to be with him, solemnly burnt Wilhelm Meister as far as the sixth Book, which he saved and had bound by itself. He seriously thinks it a defence of the Moravians, and has been much edified by it.

Baggesen has spilt an epigram at my Almanac, in which it is said the Epigrams are roughly dealt with. The point of it is, that "after first exhibiting to the reader a series of ideal figures, a Venetian pot-de-chambre is emptied upon him." The judgment at least looks very like a drenched dog. I commend these two pieces of news to your best service. Will you have the goodness to send me what *Xenia* you have left, as the press is urgent for them?

My last Almanac is prohibited in Vienna; we have, therefore, the less cause to forbear in the next one.

Farewell. The eighth Book newly copied will set me in motion again. As to matters of Natural History, orally, Herder has sent various things for the Almanac, among them one on which is written—

facit indignatio versum,
Qualem cunque potest.

SCH.

CXCv.

HEREWITH I send a good letter from Meyer ; it is the second I have received from Florence, where he is doing well ; I only wish that he may establish himself there for a good long period, in the enjoyment of tranquillity.

The copying of the Novel gets forward, and I still find a good deal to do at it ; I hope to send it to you on the 3d, or the 6th of August ; on the 10th I shall visit you, and then I hope we shall quickly get to the end of it.

Probably, too, by that time the political troubles will be somewhat less obscure. Thuringia and Saxony have, it appears, a respite to bethink them, and even that is much.

Kant's treatise on the elevated method of pursuing philosophy has given me much pleasure. It contributes decidedly towards separating things which do not belong together.

The Auto da Fé of the Stolbergs and the Epigrams of Baggesen, will bring evil upon them. They have only credit because they have been tolerated, and it will take very little to thrust them back into the circle to which they belong. Farewell. I hope your wife will do well after the change, and that the baby may thrive on his new nourishment. I will in the meanwhile be as diligent as possible, in order to be able to spend some time with you in quiet, and to discuss with you various new undertakings.

WEIMAR, 26th July, 1796.

G.

CCI.

You will have, my dear friend, to exercise some patience towards me at this period ; for now that the time is come in which I was to set out on my journey,* I feel very keenly what I lose by the deferment of so cherished a hope, which at my age is as good as crushed. What of culture I still need, I could only obtain from that source ; what is in me I could only by that means use and apply, and I was certain of bringing back into our narrow circle, a great treasure, through which hereafter we should have had a double enjoyment of the time I should have spent away from you. The observations of our excellent Meyer pain me ; he himself has but the half enjoyment from them, when I cannot share them ; and that I now see before me no undertaking which might cheer and buoy me up, also disheartens me. A long journey and many objects pressing upon me from all sides were more necessary to me than ever ; in the meanwhile, take it as I will, it were madness to set out at present, and so I must reconcile myself to it as I best can.

I hope to visit you soon, and am glad that you have devised a means by which we shall not lose our sport with the *Xenia*. I think it is the right one, and the Almanac retains its ancient form and will be distinguished among all others by an epilogue and prologue : it will not be confused through the mixture of heterogeneous kinds of poetry, and will be nevertheless as multifarious as possible. Who knows what we may strike out in order the next year to interest us in a similar manner ? Of other matters

* A journey to Italy, abandoned in consequence of the impediments caused by the war.

I will say nothing to-day. Farewell: greet your dear wife for me. I hope to find you and yours well, and in good spirits.

WEIMAR, 2d August, 1796.

G.

CCII.

JENA, 5th August, 1796.

MATTHISSON passed through here to-day. He comes directly from Italy, through Trieste and Vienna. According to his assurances, the journey to Italy is not so unsafe. He thinks there would be no difficulties by the route from Trieste to Rome, through Ancona. He himself had no unpleasant occurrences on the journey, and he was only detained at Nuremberg, for want of horses. If, therefore, within three or four weeks it were decided that you have nothing to fear for house and hearth, the journey might still be undertaken. Hirt, also, has left Italy; Matthisson parted from him in Vienna, but he says Hirt intends nevertheless to come this way. He had nothing more to tell of Meyer than what we already know, nor had he much that is new to say of any of the late events.

Of other matters, the next time. I am not alone. May this letter find you cheerful and becalmed! All are well with me, and my wife sends you hearty greetings.

SCH.

CCIII.

THE *ci-devant* Xenia look very well in their new arrangement. Now, if you could but find the few titles that are wanting: me, the spirit has not been willing to move lately. The next week I shall be with you, and I hope our meeting will not be unfruitful; we shall be able to

complete some things, and to project others. In Natural History, I have interesting matters to tell you of.

Within these few days I have discovered the most beautiful phenomenon that I know in organic nature (and that is saying much), and send you immediately the description thereof. I am ignorant whether or not it is known; if it is, the naturalists deserve blame for not proclaiming in all highways so important a phenomenon, instead of vexing the seekers of knowledge with so many tedious details. I have been able to make the observation only on one species, probably however it is the same with all, which will be decided before the Autumn is over. As the change takes place so rapidly, and on account of the smallness of the space the movement cannot be seen, it is like a fairy tale when one watches the little creature; for it is something to grow in twelve minutes half an inch in length, and proportionally in breadth, and thus to increase, as it were, cubically, and the four wings all at once! I will see if it is not possible to let you behold this phenomenon with your own eyes.

Farewell. Between ourselves I hope to be able to bring you with me peace and quiet for Thuringia and Upper Saxony.

WEIMAR, 6th August, 1796.

G.

Postscript.—Of course you are not to figure to yourself this growth as if the solid parts of the wings increased so much in so short a time; but I infer that the wings are already perfectly formed out of the most delicate *tela cellulosa*, which, by the action of some elastic fluid, be it air or vapor, becomes exuded with such quickness. I am satisfied that something similar might be detected in the development of flowers.

CCV.

My bundle was ready ; I hoped again to spend some time with you. Unhappily a variety of circumstances detain me, and I don't know when I shall see you.

I should like to be more distinctly informed what you wish to know about the Herculanean discoveries, in order to be able to meet your wishes. I send you herewith Volckmann ; there is, also, in the Buettnerian Library a work entitled, *Description of Heracleia*, from the Italian of Don *Marcello Venuti* : Frankfort and Leipsig, 1749.

The Novel again gives signs of life. After my fashion, I have found a body to your ideas ; I know not whether you will recognize those spiritual beings in their earthly form. I have almost a mind to send the work to the press without showing it to you again. That it can never satisfy your demands, is owing to the difference in our natures ; and even that will without fail give occasion to many beautiful comments when you shall once pronounce upon the whole.

From time to time let me hear something of the Almanac. Here is a short contribution ; if you can use it, I have no objection to my name being put at the end of it. What has put me in this mood, is an arrogant expression of Mr. Richter, in a letter to Knebel.

Don't fail to let me know what Humboldt writes.

In a few days Counsellor of Legation, *Mattei*, will call to see you ; give him a friendly reception ; he was tutor to Count Forstenburg, the natural son of the Duke of Brunswick, and also attached to his mother, Madame de Brankoni, and with both he has seen a good deal of the world. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 10th August, 1796.

G.

CCVI.

I HAVE just received your letter, and will forthwith send off the manuscript you ask for. My best thanks for Volckmann and the other notices. The *Chinese* shall go warm to the press ; that is the true way to treat such folk.

I am much disappointed that you cannot come immediately. I should have liked so well just now to light my little lamp by you. In regard to the Novel, you are right to reject others' views that do not assimilate with your nature. Here all is of one piece ; and even were there a chasm (which is by no means certain), it is better that it remain, as from you, than that it be filled up in a manner that is foreign to you. But, of this, more hereafter.

On Friday I shall send you sheets of the Almanac. Farewell.

SCH.

CCVII.

I GOT to-day so deeply engaged in a Poem, that I forgot it was post-day. I have this moment been reminded thereof by my wife, who sends you some biscuit, and I have only time for a few words.

Here are proofs of the better and inferior copies of the first sheets of the Almanac. 'The fourth is now in the press, and it is probable that we shall be able to get it ready in the first week of September. It will be amazingly rich, and altogether different from the one of last year. If I set off your Idyl against the Epigrams in that of the last year, the one of this will bear the palm. With my contributions therein, I am much better satisfied than I am with those of last year. I feel in an astonishing degree the change wrought in me by close relations with you ; and,

although the quality and the ability must remain the same, nevertheless a great purification has taken place within me. Some things which I have just now in hand call forth this remark.

I have not yet seen Mr. Mattei ; whenever he presents himself he shall be welcome. My brother-in-law, Counsellor v. Wolzogen, with his wife, is at present here. For several years he has occupied himself with Architecture, and, as he does not want talent, and has moreover travelled, you will not find him empty.

Farewell, and don't stay away too long. I just now wish very much to have the eighth Book again ; can I not get it soon ?

SCH.

CCVIII.

YOUR kind letter, accompanied by the first sheets of the Almanac and the good biscuit, was very acceptable to me ; it found me in the midst of all kind of work. The Almanac makes really a brilliant figure, and the whole cannot fail to be rich and manifold. As you are having several pages reprinted, could you not include the *Icy Way* ? As it now stands, it promises to be a whole, a promise which is not fulfilled, and the two distichs at the end make the idea still more wavering. I send you herewith how I should like them printed. * * *

What say you to the inclosed marvellous story ? It is taken from the Florence paper ; suppose you have it copied, and show it to some of your friends. A remarkable ordinance has at the same time been issued from the Quirinal, for the protection of the French commissaries who are expected. Therein it is declared, that instant

and most severe punishment, without the forms of trial, will be inflicted on whoever shall in the slightest manner insult them, or shall stir up any excitement or movement, no matter what may take place; referring apparently to the removal of the works of Art.

Meyer has written, and is in good spirits; he has already begun to copy the Madonna della Seggiola, and will probably afterwards undertake part of a fine picture by Michael Angelo: he still hopes to see me soon.

Next week I shall be able to say more of our politics. The Saxon contingent remains in Voightland, and the other troops are so distributed that the Cordon has a shape; notwithstanding which, however, the best that is to be hoped will not depend on force and power, but on higher relations and brighter constellations.

Greet all who are around you; I rejoice in the prospect of soon seeing you again, as from our reciprocal influence I hope for results which we now cannot at all foresee. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 13th Aug., 1796.

G.

CCIX.

At last I have letters from Swabia, which indeed do not give me much information, but on the whole relieve me. I send you Cotta's letters. My family has suffered little from the troubles of war, but so much the more from the illness of my father, who languishes on a painful sick bed with the prospect of a slow death. My youngest sister, of whom I told you last March, died in April, and my second escaped death with difficulty.

As just now I can only send letters to Swabia, through

Frankfort, and the present order to Cotta is very important to me, I beg you to envelope the enclosed to your mother in Frankfort, with a request that it be immediately despatched to Stuttgart.

At the same time have the goodness to let me know to whom I am to apply in Weimar for the cover for the Almanac about which Cotta writes.

More by the carrier to-morrow; to-day my hands are full of work.

Farewell.

I have just learnt that the Post here takes letters for Stuttgart through Frankfort; I therefore don't need to trouble you.

JENA, 15th August, 1796.

SCH.

CCXI.

ALTHOUGH we are more than ever dependent on the moment, I yet hope that nothing will prevent me from being with you to-morrow evening. The *tabulas votivas* I will bring back with me. Your distichs are extraordinarily fine, and they will certainly have an excellent effect. If it is possible for the Germans to understand that a man may be a thorough good fellow without being a Philister* or a simpleton, your "sayings" will bring about that good, inasmuch as the great relations of human nature are set forth with so much nobleness, freedom and boldness.

* Philister is a term applied derisively by the German students to trades-people and citizens. Thence it has got to be used generally to signify a prosaic vulgar-minded person.

Far am I from condemning the insertion in the Almanac of certain articles; for in it one looks for sociable variety, alternations of tone and of manner; one wishes to have at the same time bulk and multiplicity; good taste delights in discrimination and bad has an opportunity of strengthening itself, inasmuch as it is made game of.

We'll talk this all over. I hope that we shall this time again make a good stride forward together. As I have got rid of the Novel, my mind is already full of a thousand other things. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 17th Aug., 1796.

G.

CCXXII.*

* * * * *

ON the whole, I find but one impression produced by the Almanac. Every one finds himself struck by the phenomenon; and every one gathers himself up to speak of it with seeming liberality, and with more or less constrained satisfaction; and now mark whether that will not be mostly the case.

My best thanks for the singular information, that the Prophet† is in Jena. I shall endeavor to keep out of his way, and am very curious as to what you will say of him. Blumenbach has been with me also; he has with him a very interesting mummy's head.

If the meeting takes place between the Prophet and Paulus, the latter will probably get the worst of it, and will moreover have himself to thank that he has been

* The intervening letters, from the 211th to this one, relate almost entirely to the printing, publishing and distributing of the Almanac.

† Lavater.

insulted. The Prophet makes nothing of ingratiating himself even by the basest flattery, in order afterwards to be able the more securely to drive in his arrogant claws.

Do tell me something about the history of the little beauty.

A package of Cellini, about twelve sheets of manuscript, will come soon; then there will remain two divisions which I shall take in hand one after the other, as I feel utterly unfit to do anything else. The two poor last songs will have to tarry yet a while in Limbo. Here in Weimar, there is a species of the most horrible prose, of which otherwise one would have no idea.

* * * * *

Yesterday my Friday-Society began again: I will, however, only have it every fortnight, and give out invitations.

Farewell, and greet everybody.

WEIMAR, 15th Oct., 1796.

G.

CCXXIII.

JENA, 16th Oct., 1796.

* * * * *

You must read the new piece from the Journal, *Germany*. The insect has again not been able to abstain from stinging. Really we ought to hunt it to death, else we shall have no peace for it. He has aimed his malice at Cellini, and to vex you he has praised, and partly extracted, those passages which you have omitted. Of the essay of Staël he speaks with great contempt.

I gave you the day before yesterday an unnecessary alarm about Lavater. It was his brother who was here.

Reichardt also is, I hear, in Leipsig; Niethammer and Paulus did not, however, see him. Schlegel is still in Leipsig, where probably the two hearts will discharge themselves towards each other.

Farewell.

SCH.

P. S. I have just received a very handsome letter from Körner about the Almanac. You shall have it to-morrow.

CCXXIV.

I SEND you Körner's letter, which is a very comforting sound amidst the unmeaningness and flatness of the common judgment. Send it back to me as soon as you have read it.

The Humboldts wrote lately that they set off from Berlin by the end of this week, will stop on the way about ten days, and arrive here about the first of November.

Of the *Xenia* I have heard nothing further. Schlegel, who has returned, was too short a time in Leipsig, as he made an excursion to Dessau, to be able to learn much. On his return from Dessau, he says they had already made much stir in Leipsig.

I hear that among others the Duchess in W. is supposed to be the "elegant Maiden."

The *Xenion*, "Wieland! How rich is thy genius, &c.," some take for a satire on Wieland and the new edition! &c.

Farewell. I am interrupted.

18th Oct., 1796.

SCH.

CCXXV.

MANY thanks for the letter of Körner which you sent me. A feeling of such thorough friendliness, and yet growing out of the æsthetic interest, is a rare phenomenon. I will retain the letter a few days longer, to take the opportunity of examining several poems which I have not yet read. Give your friend from me cordial greetings and thanks; tell him something of my new poem, and assure him I rejoice in the prospect of seeing it some day in his hands.

We must let the dog of Gibichenstein bark for a while, until we get a good chance to strike him. In general all opposition-men, who lay themselves out to deny, and like to detract somewhat from everything, must be treated like dogs that would stop your way; one must constantly walk quietly up and down before their eyes.

I fear there is something else behind his praise of the omitted passages of Cellini. As he has the original, I fear lest he translate the wanting passages, and put forth a pirated edition of the whole, for he is capable of anything. I will, therefore, hold back the two other parts, which at any rate belong together, in the meantime fill out my manuscript, and announce a complete edition; for there is an active inquiry for it, and people are already getting impatient of the disjointed perusal in the Journal.

When you write to Boie, ask him if he will let me keep the English translation which I have from him through Eschenburg. I will willingly pay what it cost, and promise besides a copy of my translation, when it is published entire.

I am delighted to hear of Humboldt's visit. As soon as he arrives, I will pay you a visit, if only for a day.

Farewell ; greet everybody for me, and tell me soon that you have begun a new work.

WEIMAR, 19th Oct., 1796.

G.

CCXXVIII.

JENA, 23d October, 1796.

CORDIAL thanks for Meister, who will often quicken and inspirit me. I have delivered the four other copies.

Humboldt has been quite taken by surprise by our Almanac, and has revelled in it : the *Xenia*, too, have made on him the clear impression which we desire. I am glad to perceive again that upon every liberal mind the impression is agreeable and enlivening. In Berlin, he writes, although there has been a great rush for it, he has heard nothing either interesting or pleasant. Most people spoke of it under the infection of moral common-places, or they laugh at everything without discrimination as a literary bear-baiting. Among the pieces, which he did not before know, the *Icy Way* and the *Muses* by you delighted him particularly, and by me, the *Sexes* and the *Visit*. Like Genz, he admires the *Tabulas Votivas* ; but a separation of the property of each of us in those productions written in common he finds very difficult. Of the *Xenia* he writes, that they are all put upon your shoulders, which opinion has been confirmed in Berlin by Hufeland, who maintains that he has read them all in your hand-writing.

I have heard nothing else lately of the Almanac, and think that we shall but too soon discover how very little at present we can count on a general feeling in the public.

Humboldt hopes to be able to be here in eight days. I rejoice at living with him again for a while. He writes

that he did not find Stolberg in Eutin, because he happened just then to have gone to Copenhagen, and of Claudius he can give no information.

Your Swiss letters interest every one who reads them, and I am very glad that I have been able to extort these from you. It is also true that they give an uncommonly vivid picture of the Present out of which they flowed, and without having an artistic origin, they combine together into a whole very naturally and aptly.

The conclusion of Meister has deeply affected my sister-in-law, and in this instance I find my expectation, as to what produces the chief effect, confirmed. 'Tis ever the pathetic which first takes possession of the soul ; only later does feeling unite itself to the enjoyment of the serenely beautiful. At the first and also second perusal, Mignon will probably leave on every one the deepest furrow ; but still I believe that you will attain that for which you have striven ; that is, to resolve this pathetic emotion into one of beauty.

How glad I am that you propose coming for a few days ! Now that I have got rid of the labor of the Almanac, I have so much need of a new animating source of interest. It is true I have undertaken Wallenstein, but I haven't come to close quarters with it yet, and wait for a powerful hand to throw me entirely into it. The season weighs upon me as on you, and I often think that a clear look of the sun could not but start me.

Farewell. I must beg you to have the bills of both the engraver and book-binder against the Almanac made out ; on Wednesday I send the whole account to Cotta, and therefore wish to have each voucher separate.

Farewell. All greet you.

SCH.

CCXXIX.

THE box which brought the biscuits I send back with many thanks. In place of them I have laid therein a number of the Philosophical Journal, of which I have a duplicate, and which I beg you to deliver to Niethammer.

Of the last number of the *Horen* for this year, as well as of the first for the next, I have been already thinking ; but so far, I am sorry to say, without hitting upon anything that will serve. Such old things as I have, are without proper form, and are indeed out of date. The journal of my journey from Weimar to Rome, my letters from Rome, and what else there is among my papers relating thereto, could only be put into shape by myself ; and then all that I noted down during that period has more the character of a man who escapes from a pressure than of one who lives in freedom,—of a man who is struggling, who only becomes aware, little by little, that he is not equal to the subjects which he wishes to compass, and who only finds out at the end of his career that he is now for the first time in a fit state to begin it all over again. These papers might acquire some value were they properly worked up ; but as they are now in their simple, natural state, they are altogether too naïf.

On the whole I am tolerably satisfied with the Weimar public as regards the Almanac, but the course is always just the same ; the *Xenia* sell the *Tabulas Votivas* and whatever else there is that is good and earnest in the little volume. That people should not be everywhere satisfied with us, was just our design, and that there is indignation in Gotha is very well ; they looked on there with the greatest unconcern when I and my friends were treated very uncivilly ; and as literary club-law is not yet done away

with, we avail ourselves of the liberty it allows us to right our own wrongs, and to cry down the necrologic vulture who pecked out the eyes of our poor Moritz the moment he was dead. I am only waiting to see if any notice is taken of it, as I shall then expectorate as pleasantly and politely as possible.

I wish very much to hear that Wallenstein has taken hold of you; it will suit both you and the German theatre.

Within these few days I have begun to examine more closely the intestines of animals, and if I keep at it pretty diligently, I hope, during the winter, to get very well through this department of Organic Nature. Farewell. I wish very much to see you soon again.

WEIMAR, 26th Oct., 1796.

G.

CCXXXI.

JENA, 28th Oct., 1796.

HEREWITH you receive the ninth number of the *Horen*—six copies for you, one for the Duke, and one for Meyer. I beg you to have the inclosed delivered to Wieland and Knebel.

Madame v. Humboldt, with her children, arrived here this morning. He is still in Halle with Wolf, and will be here in three days.

The Humboldts were in Berlin lately, when our Almanac arrived. They say it made a great noise. Nicolai calls it the Almanac of the Furies. Zöllner and Biester were quite enchanted over it. You see that we have succeeded with Biester. He thinks the *Xenia* are written with too much moderation. Some one else said a new plague had come into the world, for that every year people would be in terror of the Almanac. Meyer, the poet, was

of opinion that we two had torn each other to pieces in the *Xenia*, and that the Distich, *Cheap Respect*, p. 221, was written by me on you.

Woltmann was yesterday with me, and insisted that of the *Xenia*, Wieland had been heard to say, he only regretted that was praised in them, because so many other worthy people were maltreated. Woltmann is firmly convinced that no other than is meant by the necrologic raven that croaks behind Wieland.

At last has appeared the first printed attack on the *Xenia*, and if all are like it, we need give ourselves no thought about them. This attack is in the — Imperial Advertiser. Schütz sent it to me; it is in the form of a distich, in which, however, the pentameter comes before the hexameter. You cannot conceive anything more pitiful. The *Xenia* are spitefully abused.

But what will amuse you is an article in the new Leipzig Intelligencer, which is published in folio. A worthy anonymous has taken up the cudgels for the *Horen* against Reichardt. Neither is named, but they are so indicated as not to be mistaken. He thinks it very censurable, that the publisher of two journals should impudently praise one in the other, and betray a mean envy of another journal. For the present he is content with giving this hint, but should it have no effect, he threatens to fall foul of him very roughly.

Here are enough novelties for to-day. We are all doing very well; I advance slowly with my work. Farewell.

SCH.

CCXXXII.

I AM obliged to go to Ilmenau for a few days, and hasten to thank you for the *Horen* you sent me. 'Tis very pleasant to learn through Humboldt of the stir the Almanac made in Berlin; he will also be able to relate how things look in Halle. So soon as I return I will visit you. Gotha is likewise in great excitement on account of our audacity. Herewith is a leaf of distichs by —, who takes the matter quite amiably. I send back the — Essay, also the copper-plates. It were a good piece of fortune if at Ilmenau I can bring forth another piece of the Epic poem; the Perfect Solitude seems to promise something.

I have heard again from Meyer; his copy is finished, and he is now busy again with descriptions of Antiquities. Farewell, and write to me still here; my letters are sent after me. Many regards to Humboldt, and to your dear wife. I long much to see you again.

WEIMAR, 29th Oct., 1796.

G.

CCXXXIV.

JENA, 2d Nov., 1796.

ONLY a short salutation for to-day. Humboldt arrived yesterday; he sends his best regards to you, and delights in the prospect of seeing you. He is well and cheerful, but his wife, who is enceinte, is not in the best health. He was very near arriving here with Reichardt; he could only escape him through stratagem. Reichardt will be here in a fortnight, to take, he says, Frederick Schlegel away from this to Gibichenstein. That I call being really carried off by the devil.

They say he gets sentimental about the *Xenia*, and

because Schlegel assures him that you had no hand in those that are directed at him, he takes great comfort, and Humboldt thinks that you are by no means secure against a visit from him. He believes that you still have some esteem for him. He also praised very warmly to Humboldt your articles in the Almanac. It appears, therefore, that for the present you have not yet attained your object with him; he is, and remains your friend, before the world, at least in his own eyes, and will probably now more than ever aim to pass for such.

In Halle, Wolf, and particularly Eberhard, are much pleased with the *Xenia*, and even Kleim, the relative of Nicolai. More particulars verbally, because this is a busy post-day with me.

Thirty copies of the Almanac have been sent to me to-day from your house.

Farewell; all send regards to you.

SCH.

CCXXXV.

YOUR two letters, most valued friend, I did not receive till late in Ilmenau, whither, as to Cimmeria, carriers slowly come, the sun seldom penetrates at this season, but the Almanac found its way early enough. I rest satisfied for the present, that, on the whole, we have produced with both little works the due effect; single utterances can seldom do the author good. He has reached his aim—be it placed near or far—where readers have a fair view of him. Then they come, they go, they run and even trip by, others stand still on the way, others turn right round, others beckon and require that the author should turn back again to them in the flat country out of which he has worked himself with so much trouble. Thus

we must look upon the universal attention we have excited as the whole result, and privately enjoy ourselves with those who are drawn to us by sympathy and insight, which are, after all, the only pure bonds of union ; thus I owe to you closer relations with Körner and Humboldt, which to me in my situation are very reviving.

Through the immediate contact with the mountains, and through the Voigtian Cabinet of Minerals, I have been drawn again into the realm of rocks. I am very glad that I have thus in an accidental way renewed these observations, without which moreover the celebrated *Morphology* would not become complete. I have on this occasion plucked from these objects some good views, which I will take an opportunity of communicating.

Otherwise I have not seen so much as the hem of the garment of a Muse, nay, even for prose I have found myself unapt, and neither of production nor reproduction has there been the slightest trace. We must wait patiently for what is to come. When I can see you, I know not yet ; for the present I cannot get away from this ; perhaps I will come just for one day, to greet Humboldt, and talk over many things. Farewell, and give my regards to all around you. Herewith is the copy for Humboldt.

WEIMAR, 12th Nov., 1796.

G.

CCXXXVI.

JENA, 13th Nov., 1796.

IT is truly a comfort to me to know that you are again near us ; I have never yet been so long separated from you, although I have been less alone than usual. I shall be happy to be made acquainted with your new discoveries for *Morphology* ; the poetic hour will strike in due time.

Nothing new has happened here in your absence ; neither in the literary world has anything that I know of turned up. I send you the *Coadjutor's* letter relating to the *Xenia*. From it you will see, that a man may sin largely who has once got himself settled in a good moral calling.

I have been studying diligently the historical sources of my *Wallenstein*, and have made some not unimportant advances into the economy of the piece. The more I rectify my ideas as to its form, the more enormous appears to me the bulk which is to be mastered, and truly without a certain bold faith in myself I should hardly be able to proceed. If you have the work of —, on Iffland, I beg you to send it to us. I have heard such odd things about it ; they say there is a letter in it from Mad. —.

I send you another leaf of hexameters, that have been made against you or me in Breslau, by a champion of Mr. Manso. It is strange that so far all our assailants fail in the measure.

Alexander Von Humboldt, his brother tells me, is delighted with the *Xenia*. So here we have another with whose nature this substance can assimilate.

Farewell. All send best regards to you ; the Humboldts, who thank you cordially for the copy of *Meister*, long to see you. All are well with me.

SCH.

CCXXXVII.

THE papers I received from you to-day shall be sent back immediately. It is really remarkable that our adversaries have not yet been able to discover the element in which we move.

I send you the "High German Literary Gazette," and beg you to let me have it again soon. A light, superficial, but well-meaning treatment of the whole, such as this, is not unacceptable. The reviewer is, at any rate, from beginning to end, *à son aise*, which would not be the case with every one. The mistakes of the press in the quoted passages are amusing enough.

I send also the book you ask for. Such a patchwork has seldom been seen. If artists and works of art did not always, like loaded puppets, set themselves again on their legs, they would, through the aid of such friends, be stuck with their heads downwards in the mud for ever. It is extraordinary how, with all his impotence, the author endeavors by certain thrusts to make himself formidable even to his own hero. His malice towards you is conspicuous in several passages. I have a mischievous project, whereby, through a sophistical turn, he may be put in the wrong, and exterminated on his own ground. If you approve of the joke, I will execute it; it is, I think, *sans replique*, like the one about literary sans-culottism. But more of this verbally.

Meyer sends kind greetings to you; he is doing bravely in Florence, both as to active work and study; only the loneliness is getting oppressive to him. Farewell, and give my kind regards to all that are dear to you.

WEIMAR, 13th November, 1796.

G.

CCXXXVIII.

SOME things that I left out yesterday I will at once bring up. In the first place, I congratulate you on the second edition; you could not well do otherwise than have it printed in Jena. Send me the paper for the covers soon,

for they move slowly here. I will at an early day send you some mistakes of the press. How large do you think of making this edition? We may yet live to see the third.

You can announce to me, however, nothing more agreeable than your perseverance at Wallenstein, and your belief in the possibility of a completion; for after the mad venture with the *Xenia*, we must devote ourselves to nothing but large and noble works of art, and, to the confusion of all adversaries, transmute our poetic nature into the forms of the noble and good.

The first three cantos of my epic poem are thoroughly worked up, and have been once more copied. I look forward with pleasure to taking an opportunity of reading them to the Humboldts.

My observations in Natural History give me much pleasure. It seems peculiar, and still it is natural, that in the end there must result a kind of subjective whole. It becomes, if you please, strictly the world of the eye, which is exhausted through color and form. For when I pay close attention, I need very little assistance from the other senses, and all reasoning transforms itself into a kind of exposition.

So much for to-day, with a hearty farewell.

WEIMAR, 15th Nov., 1796.

G.

CCXXXIX.

JENA, 18th Nov., 1796.

IN Copenhagen they are furious against the *Xenia*, as Mad. Schimmelman writes to say, who had herself a more liberal sentimentality, and, if she could, would like

to be just towards us. We must by no means expect that this production of ours will be estimated according to its nature ; they who are the best disposed towards us barely tolerate it.

In all opinions of this kind that I have heard, the miserable part of the seduced falls to my lot ; you have at least the consolation of the seducer.

It is indeed very well, and for me particularly, to bring before the public just now something important and earnest ; but when I reflect that the greatest and highest, even for sentimental readers, has been accomplished by you, quite recently in *Meister*, and even in the *Almanac*, without the public being able to overcome its sensitiveness as to light attacks, I scarcely hope ever to get it into a better mood by anything good and finished in my style. You, they never will pardon your truth, your depth of nature ; and for me, if I may here speak of myself, the strong opposition of my nature to the times and to the multitude, will never make the public my friend. It is well that this is by no means necessary to put and keep me in activity. You can be totally indifferent to it, particularly now, when, in spite of all shallow talk, the taste of the better sort is taking such a direction as must lead to the fullest recognition of your merit.

Herewith is a long letter from Körner on *Meister*, which contains much that is beautiful and excellent. Pray send it back to me immediately by the carrier-girl, as I should like to have it copied, and use it for the twelfth number of the *Horen*, if you have no objection.

I don't dare yet to think of the *Almanac* for next year, and all my hope is turned toward you. For I now perceive clearly, that *Wallenstein* will take me the whole

winter, and even almost the whole summer, inasmuch as I have to deal with a most refractory material, out of which I can only extract something by an heroic perseverance. As, moreover, I want some even of the commonest means through which a man is brought in closer contact with life and with men, and steps forth out of his narrow existence on to a wider stage, I must therefore, like an animal that is deficient in certain organs, learn to do more with those I have, and, as it were, make up for the hands with the feet. In fact, I lose an incalculable quantity of strength and time, in overcoming the limits of my accidental situation, and preparing for myself special instruments in order to master a subject so foreign to me as the living world, and particularly the political. I am right impatient that I have only got so far in the tragic tale of Wallenstein, as to be perfectly certain of its fitness for tragedy; for if I found it otherwise, I would not indeed entirely abandon the work, for I have wrought enough at it already to make out of it a good dramatic picture, but I should first finish the "Knights of Malta," which, with a much simpler organization, is decidedly adapted to tragedy.

Farewell; we all heartily long to see you.

Herewith you receive the copper-plate from Bolt, together with paper for printing.

SCH.

CCXL.

THE letter of Körner has given me a great deal of pleasure, the more that it happened to find me in a decided æsthetic loneliness. The clearness and freedom with which he surveys his subject, are truly admirable; he floats over the whole, views the parts with individuality

and clearness, takes first here, then there, a voucher for his judgment, decomposes the work in order to put it together again after his own fashion, and for the present sets aside whatever disturbs the unity that he seeks or finds, instead of stopping at it at once, or even leaning directly against it, as readers generally do. The underscored passage pleased me particularly, as upon this point I especially directed an uninterrupted attention, and, according to my feeling, this ought to be the chief thread, which latently holds the whole together, and without which no novel can have any value. This essay exemplifies in a striking manner the fact, that the reader must keep himself in a very active productive mood, if he wishes to partake of any genuine production whatever.* Of passive participation, I have again unhappily witnessed the saddest examples, and it is ever but a repetition of the refrain; "in my head it will not go!" Of a truth, the head takes in no work of art, but in company with the heart.

Thus, recently, some one wrote to me that the passage in the second book, page 138, "No! he exclaimed, thou imaginest, thou withered worldling, that thou canst be a friend. All that thou canst offer me is not worth the feeling that binds me to these unfortunates!"—he had taken as the central point of the whole, and that from it he had drawn his circle, but that the last part didn't fit thereto, and he could make nothing of it.

Thus, another assured me that my *Idyl* was an admirable poem, only it wasn't quite clear to him, whether I shouldn't do better to divide it into two or three poems.

Are not such utterances enough to freeze Hippocrene to

* Wordsworth, in one of his Prefaces, has a passage singularly coincident with this.

ice, and make Pegasus shed his coat! However, five and twenty years since, when I began, 'twas just the same, and will be so long after I shall be gone. Meanwhile, it is not to be denied that it does nevertheless look as if certain views and principles, without which one ought never to approach a work of art, must by degrees become more general.

Meyer sends kindest regards from Florence; he has at last received the *Idyl*; it were well if, through Cotta and Escher, we could transmit to him an entire *Almanac*.

I hope that the people of Copenhagen and all enlightened inhabitants of the North Sea, will, out of our *Xenia*, draw a new argument in favor of the real and incontrovertible existence of the Devil, whereby we shall then have done them an essential service. It is, on the other hand, very distressing, that their invaluable liberty of being vapid and shallow, should be embittered in so unfriendly a way.

Körner's essay, I should think, is very well suited for the *Horen*. The light and yet so excellent style in which the whole is treated, will make the contortions, that are to be expected from other critics, appear so much the more extravagant.

For the rest it is highly necessary that I should see you soon; there is much to be talked over. I wish very much to be informed of your progress with *Wallenstein*.

Farewell, and give my regards to all friends.

WEIMAR, 19 NOV., 1796.

G.

CCXLI.

JENA, 22d November, 1796.

PROBABLY to-morrow you will see Humboldt, who goes to Erfurt for a few days. He wishes much to be able to pass the evening with you.

You have perhaps seen the new number of the "Archive of the Times," which contains a sally upon you by old Klopstock. It has vexed him that in your epigrams of the last year, you complain of being obliged to write German, and he vents his displeasure in an epigram, which is in truth very lamentable. It is inserted in a continuation of his grammatic dialogues, and "Judgment!" thus speaks :

"Goethe, thou pitiest thyself that thou writest me ?

If thou knewest me,

This were not hateful to thee. Goethe, I pity thee too !"

Humboldt will tell you also of a review by the younger Schlegel of Woldemar, and of a fulminating letter of Jacobi on this review, that will very much amuse you.

But when shall we see you once more here ? I heartily long to do so ; it is to me as if there were wanting something of the element in which I am to live.

I have a visit and must close. Farewell.

SCH.

CCXLII.

ON a card accompanying this you will find some remarks on the *Xenia*—perhaps you can yet make use of them.

The Humboldts will return hither from Erfurt on Tuesday, and will dine with me ; I wish you could make up

your mind to come over on that day with your dear wife. You could remain the night here and drive back again with Humboldt on Wednesday. The present weather requires almost so heroic an undertaking.

As I do not see that I shall be able very soon to pass some time with you, I will come perhaps only for a day ; for there are a vast many things in which I discover the want of your participation.

I enclose a letter from Humboldt, that will give you pleasure. It is truly cheering to have such sympathizing friends and neighbors ; out of my own circle I have never yet met with anything of the kind. Farewell, and think of my invitation.

WEIMAR, 26th November, 1796.

G.

CCXLIII.

JENA, 28th November, 1796.

I SHALL hardly be able to avail myself of your friendly invitation, for in all my nerves I feel this wretched season and weather, and can just keep myself up. In amends for this, I hope to see you soon if only for a day, to hear from you your latest discoveries and observations, and at the same time to tell you what I have been about.

Wallenstein gets on just now very slowly, because I am still occupied chiefly with the raw material, which is not yet all collected, but I continue to feel myself equal to it, and I have obtained many distinct definite views as to the form. What I *wish*, and what I *ought*, also what I *have*, is now tolerably clear to me ; the only thing now is, with what is in me and what I have, to execute that which I wish and ought. In regard to the *spirit* in which I work,

you will probably be satisfied with me. I shall have no difficulty in keeping the material out of myself and in giving only the object. I might almost say, that the subject doesn't interest me at all, and I have never united in myself such a coldness for the matter with such a warmth for the work. The principal character, as well as most of the subordinate ones, I treat so far really with the pure love of the Artist; only in the character next to the principal one, young Piccolomini, do I feel personally interested, whereby, however, the whole will rather gain than lose.

With regard to the dramatic action, as the chief thing, I have not yet the thoroughly ungrateful and unpoetic material quite under subjection; there are still chasms in the conduct of the piece, and there is much that will not let itself be shut up within the limits of the economy of a tragedy. Neither is the *Proton Pseudos* in the catastrophe, owing to which a tragic development is so difficult, entirely overcome. Fate proper, does too little towards the misfortune of the hero, and his own fault too much. Here, however, I am in some measure consoled by the example of Macbeth, whose Fate likewise is much less to blame than he himself for his ruin.

But of these and other difficulties verbally.

Humboldt's comments on Körner's letter seem to me not unimportant, although, as regards the character of Meister, he appears to go too far on the opposite side. Körner looks upon this character as too much the proper hero of the Novel; the title and the ancient usage of requiring a hero in every novel, have misled him. Wilhelm Meister is indeed the most necessary person, but not the most important; this is one of the very peculiarities of

your Novel, that it neither has nor needs any such most important person. To him and around him everything happens, but not strictly on his account. Because the things around him represent and express the active energies of the world, but he represents the susceptibility to outward influences, he must therefore stand towards his fellow-characters in a totally different relation from that of the hero in other novels.

On the other hand, I think Humboldt very unjust towards this character, and I do not understand how he can regard the task which the author proposed to himself in the Novel as ended, if Meister were the heedless and unprincipled being that he pronounces him to be. If in Meister humanity itself in its entire compass is not summoned and put into play, then is the Novel not complete, and if Meister himself is not altogether competent to this, then you ought not to have chosen this character. It is indeed a delicate and holy circumstance for the Novel, that in the person of Meister it closes neither with a decided individuality, nor with a realized ideality, but with a middle something between the two. The character is individual, but only as to its limitations, and not as to its compass, and it is ideal, but only as to its capability. Accordingly, it denies us the immediate satisfaction which we ask (definiteness), and promises us a higher and the highest, for which we must trust it to a remote future.

It is comical enough how in such a product so much conflict of judgments is possible.

Farewell, and give our regards to the Humboldts.

SCH.

CCXLIV.

I SPENT yesterday very pleasantly with the Humboldts, and until towards noon entertained the hope of seeing you here. If, meanwhile, those hours passed profitably and agreeably to you also, I am rejoiced; may it continue so until you attain your object.

Starke promises me copies to-day, and I hope to send them with this.

Burgsdorf made a favorable impression on me in his behavior and the little he spoke.

A new work of Madame de Staël, *De l'Influence des Passions*, &c., is very interesting; it is written in the constant view of a wide and great world in which she has lived, and full of genial, delicate, and bold remarks.

WEIMAR, 30th Nov., 1796.

G.

CCXLV.

VERY fine sledding in this glorious weather has prevented me from writing to you for some days, and I now say a few words to you in the evening of a very fair day.

The work of Mad. de Staël, of which Mr. v. Humboldt will have told you, I will send you in a few days. It is extremely interesting to see how one of so much sensibility and ardor passes through the terrible purgatory of such a revolution, in which she was obliged to participate so largely, and I may say comes out with nothing left in her but the most spiritual human qualities. Perhaps a selection might be made of the highest thoughts in a series, and used for the *Horen*, or only a single chapter be taken, but soon; for, by Easter, a translation will certainly be out. This I leave to your judgment.

Although I presume that the malice of our guests

will have supplied Jena with copies of the accompanying, I nevertheless send you mine. It is amusing to see what it is that has offended this kind of people, what they believe offends others, how hollow, empty and common they esteem an existence different from their own, how they direct their shafts against the outworks of appearances, how little they even dream in what an inaccessible castle that man lives who is always in earnest in regard to himself and everything around him.

So many circumstances and relations chain me here still, as I shouldn't now like to come to you without remaining at least some days with you. The theatre is just getting under way, through the means of some good pieces and representations, and a new regulation for its management requires my presence.

I also expect young Jacobi about this time, and shall be obliged therefore to forego for a while yet the inspiring effect of personal contact with you.

For the rest, things go their usual way, and I have good hopes in several departments of my studies. Give my best regards to the Humboldts, and tell me soon how you are, and how your work prospers.

WEIMAR, 5th Dec., 1796.

G.

CCXLVI.

JENA, 6th Dec., 1796.

I HAVE again almost entirely lost several days through bad sleep, and find myself thereby very unpleasantly interrupted in my work, which otherwise makes good progress. An occupation like that I am now on irritates one who is of a susceptible morbid nature the more powerfully, because it shakes the whole man more thoroughly and constantly.

The day before yesterday I had a half hope of seeing you here. I am very sorry for the new postponement. If when you do come you could then but stay the longer!

The dirty production against us, whose author is said to be M. Dyk, in Leipsig, came into my hands a few days ago. I hoped it would remain unknown to you. The resentment of certain people can indeed find no nobler utterance; but only in Germany were it possible that malice and rudeness could count upon not forfeiting all readers by such a treatment of respected names. Where there is no shame, one ought to be able to rely upon fear to hold such culprits in check; but the police is as badly constituted as taste.

The unpleasant part of the affair is this, that the very wise moderate gentlemen, however incapable they be of taking such a work under their protection, will nevertheless exult and say, that our attack produced it, and that, at bottom, we are the cause of the scandal.

For the rest, these distichs are the most shining justification of ours, and there is no help for him who does not now perceive that the *Xenia* are a poetic production. Coarseness and offensiveness could not be more clearly distilled from genius and bad humor than has here been done, and the whole Dykian party has now the disadvantage of having gone infinitely farther in the only thing with which they could at all have reproached us. I am now curious whether some voices will not spontaneously be lifted up for the *Xenia*; for we, of course, can take no notice of a thing like this.

I await with curiosity the work of Mad. de Staël. It would give an advantageous variety to the *Horen*, if we extract what is most piquant and pithy.

We shall apparently be very successful with *Agnes von Lilien*; for all the voices that I have been able to gather here pronounce themselves in its favor. Could you, however, believe it, that our great critics here, the Schlegels, have not for an instant doubted that it is by you? Nay, Madame Schlegel thinks that you have never yet created so pure and perfect a female character, and she admits that her opinion of you has been very much elevated by this production. Others seem to be quite otherwise edified by it than by the fourth volume of *Meister*. I have not yet been able to make up my mind to dispel this happy illusion.

Farewell, and do not allow yourself to be disturbed in your tranquillity either by this unexpected present, or by that insolence. What is, is, and what is to be, will not fail to come.

We all send you hearty good wishes.

SCH.

CCXLVII.

THE work of Madame de Staël accompanies this; I am sure it will delight you. I have also already had the notion that it might be used for the *Horen*; it were perhaps practicable to string together the most remarkable passages. Do you therefore read the book with pencil in hand, and make your remarks, and beg Mr. Humboldt to do the same; thereby my work of selection will be facilitated; so soon as I get it back I can begin. A package of Cellini is ready, if you need it.

I also send another Elegy, for which I desire your approval. At the same time that I announce therein my new poem, I design to begin with it a new book of Elegies.

The second will probably contain a longing to go over the Alps a third time, and thus I will proceed further either at home or on the journey.

With this I should like you to open the new year of the *Horen*, in order that people may see that we in every way stand firm, and are prepared for every event.

To me, who have known the Germans so long, there was nothing peculiar in the Dykian attack. We may expect more of the same kind. The German sees only matter, and thinks that if for a poem he gives matter, he is even with it; his idea of form reaches no further than the metre.

To be candid, however, the conduct of these people is altogether what I wish; for it is a policy not sufficiently known and practised, that whoever makes pretension to any posthumous fame, should force his contemporaries to out with whatever they have against him. The impression made thereby he always effaces by his presence, his life and activity. Of what avail was it to many a discreet, meritorious, and clever man, whom I have outlived, that, through incredible compliance, passiveness, flattery, advancing and retiring, he obtained a tolerable reputation during his life? The instant he is dead, the devil's attorney plants himself by the side of the corpse, and the angel, who is there to be his counterpart, wears mostly a very sorrowful visage.

I hope that the *Xenia* will continue operating for a long while, and keep alive the evil spirit against us; in the mean time we will proceed with our positive labors, and leave to it the torment of negation. Not until they are again perfectly quiet, and think themselves safe, must we (if the humor holds) once more stir up their bile from the very bottom.

Let me have as long as possible the honor of passing for the author of *Agnes von Lilien*. It is a pity that we don't live in darker times ; for then posterity would have a fine library under my name. Some one assured me, the other day, that he had lost a considerable bet, because he obstinately maintained that I was the author of *Mr. Starke*.

With me, too, one day follows the other, not indeed unoccupied, but, I'm sorry to say, almost without profit. I must make an arrangement to change my sleeping room, in order that I may dictate in bed in the morning some hours before day. May you likewise find the means better to employ time, which is only truly precious to more highly organized natures ! Farewell, and give my regard to all around you.

WEIMAR, 7th Dec., 1796.

G.

CCXLVIII.

JENA, 9th Dec., 1796.

THANKS for what you sent the day before yesterday. The Elegy makes a peculiar, deep, affecting impression, which cannot miss every reader's heart who has one. Its close reference to a definite existence gives it additional emphasis, and the elevated, sweet repose mingles so beautifully with the passionate color of the moment. It is to me a new and most encouraging illustration of how the poetic spirit so quickly and so successfully overmasters whatever is common in the reality, and by a swing, which it gives itself, is at once clear of such fetters, so that common souls can only look after it with hopeless despair.

One thing only I suggest to you, whether the present

moment is entirely favorable for the publication of the poem. In the next two or three months, I fear, the public will not be in a mood to do justice to the *Xenia*. The supposed insult is still too fresh ; we are believed to be in the wrong, and this feeling in readers will harden them. It cannot however but happen that our antagonists, by their violence and coarseness, will put themselves at a still greater disadvantage, and excite against them the better disposed. Then I think would be the time when the Elegy would complete the triumph.

How far the quiver against us is from being exhausted, you have another proof in the accompanying sheet, appended to the *New Hamburg Gazette*, and which has been sent to me from Hamburg. The plan of this repartee is not badly conceived, were it not so unskilfully executed. Is, perhaps, Reichardt, or Baggesen, at the bottom of it?

What you say in your last letter of the higher and more remote advantages of such contests with contemporaries, may be quite true ; but yet one sacrifices thereby tranquillity and incitement from without. With you this is merely an inward, and certainly not an outward want. Your so peculiar, isolated, and energetic individuality requires, as it were, this exercise ; but otherwise, I know really of no one who has less need than you of insuring his life with posterity.

The work of De Staël I have not been able to take in hand until to-day ; it however immediately interested me through some admirable ideas. Whether any use can be made of it for the *Horen*, I doubt, because a few days since I heard announced as on the eve of appearing a translation of it, which is said to have been caused by the authoress herself.

Herewith I send a copy of the new edition of the Almanac, together with a note from Voss.

May the Muse abide with you with her choicest gifts, and long preserve to her glorious friend his youth ! I am still in the Elegy ; whoever has any affinity whatever with you, perceives therein so vividly your existence, your peculiar self.

I embrace you with all my heart.

SCH.

CCXLIX.

MY best thanks for the copy of the second edition which you sent me ; it looks very well, and probably will not stay on hand.

That you enjoy the Elegy is very agreeable to me ; I conjecture that some companions will soon follow it. As regards the printing, I leave that entirely to your judgment ; I am quite content that it be not made public for some time. I shall in the mean time communicate it in manuscript to friends and well-wishers ; for I know from experience, that, although in the midst of conflict and excitement, enemies are not to be converted, there is, however, cause for confirming friends.

I have been given to understand that something is soon to appear in favor of the Almanac ; but in what form or character I do not know. I observe generally that it is a speculation of booksellers to have anything printed *pro* or *contra*. That will be a fine collection !

The manner in which Voss behaves in regard to the Almanac pleases me well ; I am very glad that he is coming.

I expect a speedy answer to my letter of yesterday.

Diderot's work will not fail to entertain you. Farewell. Kind greetings to all, and retain for me your so well-grounded friendship, and your so beautifully felt love, and be assured of the like from me.*

WEIMAR, 10th Dec, 1796.

G.

CCLI.

ONLY two words for to-day, as my Optics have taken away from me the whole morning. My exposition becomes more and more clear, and the whole simplifies itself incredibly, which is natural, as properly elementary phenomena are treated of.

The Sunday letter I received and made use of; I presume that it will decide the matter, whereon I wish you joy beforehand. Farewell. I send herewith more frontispieces; may the light Terpsichore† spring still further into the world to the vexation of all her enemies!

WEIMAR, 14th Dec., 1796.

G.

CCLII.

YESTERDAY and to-day I worked so diligently at Walenstein that I forgot entirely that yesterday was the day for the carrier, and also to-day I only at the last moment recollected the post.

* This sentence I translate word for word, in order not to weaken or modify such an utterance from a Goethe towards a Schiller.

† In allusion to an engraving of Terpsichore prefixed to the Almanac.

My best thanks for your friendly mediation in that affair, which makes me very comfortable for the future.*

Thanks also for the Terpsichore.

We all send hearty regards.

JENA, 14th Dec., 1796.

SCH.

CCLIII.

THAT Wallenstein gets on bravely as you write is to be expected, and my hopes of him are the stronger now that he has begun to create himself, and I am glad that I shall find the first Act finished by the New Year. Sooner, however, I shall not be able to come, as I have a journey before me, of which I will tell you further when it is decided.

The Optics go forward, although I at present pursue the study more as an occupation than as an amateur ; nevertheless the papers are already in that state of preparation that it is not difficult to act upon them. Knebel takes an interest in the investigation, which is a great advantage to me, as thus I write for others as well as myself. For the

* Allusion is here made, probably, to a pension bestowed by the Grand Duke of Weimar upon Schiller, in addition to his salary as Professor in the University of Jena. The "Sunday letter," mentioned in the preceding note, refers, no doubt, to the same affair ; to which, also, allusion is made towards the end of letter 249, just before that warm expression of Goethe's feelings, which, with tender consideration, he chose the moment to make when he was doing his friend an important kindness, designing to kindle in Schiller a glow that would make his bosom too warm for any feeling of pride.

Schiller was put at his ease by this increase of income, obtained through the generous friendship of Goethe from the enlightened liberality of the Grand Duke.

rest it is good chiefly as an exercise of the mind, a quieter of the passions, and a compensation for the passions, as Mad. de Staël has circumstantially explained.

Send me her book back soon ; everybody is asking after it. Use has already been made of it in the *Mercury*. Diderot you can keep longer ; it is a splendid book, and almost says even more to the Poet than to the plastic Artist, notwithstanding that it often waves before the latter a powerful torch.

Farewell. Regards to all. Our sledding is very gay. Jacobi is with me ; he has cultivated himself right bravely. More soon.

WEIMAR, 17th Dec., 1796.

G.

CCLIV.

DECEMBER is going gradually by, and you don't come. I shall begin soon to fear that we shall not see each other again before the year ninety-seven. I am glad to learn that you have taken up Optics in earnest ; for I think that this triumph over adversaries cannot be too much hastened. For myself it will be agreeable to me to get a knowledge of this subject through your labors.

My work advances with lively steps. I hav'n't found it possible to separate the preparation and the plan from the execution so long as I in the beginning wished. So soon as the firm points were once settled, and I obtained in a general way a steady view of the whole, I let myself go, and thus were several scenes in the first Act at once executed without my having strictly such an intent. My perception grows daily clearer, and one thing leads to another.

Towards Twelfth Night, I think, the first Act, which will be also by much the longest, will be so far done, that you will be able to read it ; for, before I venture further, I should like to know whether it is the good spirit that leads me. An evil one it is not, that I am sure of, but between the two there are so many degrees.

After mature deliberation I have kept to dear prose which also suits this material much better.

Farewell. With us all are tolerably well.

SCH.

CCLVI.

THE work of Mad. de Staël has arrived, and shall go back again so soon as the curiosity of friends is satisfied. You will see Knebel, and find him very sprightly ; he is helping me on at present in a most friendly way with my optical labors ; I am just now drawing the plates, and as everything is here narrowed down, I discover a fuller maturity. I have made a hasty sketch of the Preface ; I will communicate it to you soon, to hear whether you approve of the manner in which I have handled it.

I send back Boie's letter ; I am very glad that he surrenders to me Cellini ; I will in return give him a good copy of my Novel, and write him besides a friendly letter.

I am happy to hear that the Elegy has made a favorable impression on Körner. On the whole, however, I am convinced that your remark is just, that it is not yet time to make it public : I have been very sparing of it also in private.

On the third day of the holidays I go with the Duke to Leipsig. Say nothing about this to any one except Humboldt, and ask this friend whether he advises me to see

any other person besides Professor Lewis and Mr. Fisher. As we shall probably go to Dessau, we shall not return under twelve or fourteen days; if, therefore, you wish anything of me before I set out, have the goodness to let me know soon.

As my poor subject* will have to endure all kinds of suffering on this tour, in particular physically, I hope to be enriched by a variety of new objects.

My Anatomy of Fishes and Worms has again, in the last few days, given rise to some very fruitful ideas.

Farewell, and enter the New Year full of activity, and continue to gain ground in the dramatic field. January, too, must not pass without our seeing each other. Meanwhile farewell.

The Schlegels will probably tell of a large purely literary entertainment at which they assisted.

WEIMAR, 21st December, 1796.

G.

CCLVIII.

LEIPSIG, 1st January, 1797.

BEFORE I leave this I must give some sign of life, and a brief account of myself. After we had, on the 28th December, struggled through the wind on the Ettersberg and arrived at Buttstedt, we found a very tolerable road, and passed the night in Rippach. On the 29th, by eleven o'clock, we were in Leipzig, and have in the meantime seen a quantity of people, have been invited to dinners and suppers, and I escaped with difficulty the one-half of this kindness. There were some very interesting men among the crowd; I have also seen some old friends and ac-

* Himself.

quaintance, as well as some admirable works of art, which have washed out my eyes again.

We have now a hard New Year's Day to get through, in which, in the morning early, a Cabinet is to be examined, at noon a great banquet to be eaten, in the evening a concert to be attended, and thereupon a long supper is also unavoidable. When we get home, about one o'clock, we have before us, after a short sleep, the journey to Dessau, which, on account of the great thaw that has just set in, is in some measure hazardous ; nevertheless, that also we shall get through safely.

So much as I rejoice that after this dissipation I shall soon go back to you in your Jena solitude, I am yet glad once more to behold such a mass of people, with whom I have properly no relation. I have been enabled to make many good observations on the workings of dogmatic, polemic, and belles-lettres writings, and the promised counter-manifesto* will not be the worse for it.

Fare you right well. As we go so early as to-morrow to Dessau, it looks as if the journey altogether will not last too very long.

Tell Mr. Humboldt that I have seen Dr. Fisher, and have been right well pleased with him. The shortness of the days, and the very bad thawing weather prevent me from making as much of my stay as I would wish ; yet one finds accidentally much that one seeks for in vain. Fare you once more well, cheerful and diligent.

G.

* A rejoinder to a new attack, on the part of Reichardt, proposed by Schiller in the preceding letter, 257, which I have omitted.

CCLIX.

AFTER a fortnight's absence I am safely returned, very well satisfied with my journey, on which I met with much that was agreeable and nothing disagreeable. I have a great deal to tell of it, and so soon as I shall have again put things a little in order here, I will come over to you, if even only for a day. Unhappily I cannot come at once, however much I desire to speak to chief-counsellor-of-mines Humboldt. Greet both brothers most kindly, and say that I will immediately make arrangements to procure for Mr. Gentsch the specified books.

I much desire to see you again, for I shall soon be in the condition, that out of sheer matter I cannot write any more until we have seen one another again, and had a right thorough talk.

The journey brought me in nothing poetical, except that I have entirely planned the conclusion of my epic poem. Write me what in the meanwhile the Muse has vouchsafed to you. Greet your dear wife, and tell me how the little ones are.

WEIMAR, 11th January, 1797.

It is very odd about that book that Counsellor Schlegel brought with him to me. Some one of the friends present at the time must have put it in his pocket, for I have not seen it since and thence forgotten it; I will immediately send round to find out where it is. When you see Schlegel, tell him that I have a compliment to bring him from a right pretty woman, who seemed to take a very lively interest in him.

G.

CCLX.

I HAVE just received your dear letter, which heartily rejoices me with the news of your return. To me, this time of your absence from Jena lasts indescribably long ; although I have had no lack of conversation, still I have missed just the kind of invigoration I most need at my work. Do come as soon as you can. I, to be sure, have not gathered much that I could impart, but therefore the more eagerly and needily shall I receive whatever I can hear from you.

We are all as well as we are wont to be ; I have been by no means idle, although in these oppressive dismal winter days everything ripens later, and the right form is harder to find. Meanwhile, I see clearly before me, and my material becomes more and more yielding. The first condition of a successful progress in my work, is a lighter air and exercise ; I am therefore resolved, with the first stirrings of spring, to change my place of abode, and to look out for a summer-house, if possible in Weimar, with rooms that can be heated. This is now an urgent want to me, and if I can combine this end with a more frequent and easier communication with you, my wishes are for the present satisfied. I think that I shall be able to effect it.

The Reichardt affair I have for some time past put out of my mind, because with respect to it I will gladly acquiesce in your advice. It came upon me in the close air of a small room, and everything that happens to me must contribute to make this vexation still more onerous to me.

But Wieland will now likewise come out against the *Xenia*, as you will see by the first number of the "*Mercury*." Now, it would be unpleasant if he were to force us

to a conflict with him too, and it is a question whether it would not be well to remind him of the consequences.

Your commissions shall be attended to. I send herewith the twelfth number of the *Horen*; the other copies will come the day after to-morrow.

We all embrace you cordially.

JENA, 11th January, 1797.

SCH.

CCLXI.

JENA, 17th January, 1797.

I AM just about to leave off work, and will say good evening to you before laying aside my pen. Your last visit, even short as it was, has removed a certain stagnation in me, and raised my courage. Through your descriptions you have led me again into the world, from which I felt myself entirely separated.

But, especially am I rejoiced at your lively inclination to a continued poetic activity. Through this a fresher and more beautiful life opens before you, and to me, likewise, not only in work, but also through the mood into which it will put you, will it impart itself, and quicken me. I should wish particularly to know now the chronology of your works; it would surprise me, if, in the developments of your being, a certain necessary course of nature in man generally were not traceable. You must have had a certain, not very short, epoch, which I might call your analytic period, wherein through division and separation you struggled towards wholeness; wherein your being was as it were fallen out with itself and sought to reinstate itself again through Art and Science.

Now, it seems to me, you return cultivated and ripe back to your youth, and will unite the fruit with the blos-

som. 'This second youth is the youth of the gods, and immortal, like them.

Your small and large Idyl, and also lately your Elegy, show this, as well as the old Elegies and Epigrams. I should like, however, to know the history of the earlier works, of Meister itself. It will be no lost labor to write down what you know about them. Without this one cannot get to know you entirely. Pray, therefore, do it, and also deposit with me a copy thereof.

If anything falls into your hands about the Lenzian inheritance, remember me. We must scrape together whatever we find for the *Horen*. With your altered plan for the future, perhaps you can let the *Horen* have the benefit likewise of the Italian papers.

I beg you also to think of Cellini, that I may have it in about three weeks.

The answer to friend Reichardt, I beg you also not entirely to forget.

Fare you right well.

SCH.

CCLXII.

THE few hours that I spent recently with you, have made me eager for a good long time together after our old fashion. So soon as I have in some measure got through with various things here, and arranged others, I will spend again some time with you, which, as I hope, will be in more than one sense fruitful for us both. Don't fail to profit by your best hours to bring the Tragedy further, in order that we may begin to discourse about it together.

I have just received your dear letter, and do not deny, that the wonderful epoch into which I am entering is to

me myself very remarkable ; unhappily, I am not yet entirely at ease in regard to it, for, of the analytic period, I drag along with me still so much that I cannot get rid of, and scarcely can work off. Meanwhile, nothing is left for me but to steer my vessel on this stream as well as it will go. What the effect is of a journey in such a disposition, I have already seen in the last fourteen days. Meanwhile, as to the distant and the whole, nothing can be predicted, as this regulated power of Nature, like all unregulated ones, can be guided by nothing in the world, but, just as it must form itself, so likewise it operates out of itself, and in its own way. This phenomenon will give us occasion for many reflections.

The promised article is so ripe, that I could dictate it in an hour ; it is necessary, however, that I first talk with you again about the affair, and I shall the more hasten to be with you again soon. Should a longer stay in Jena be not possible, I will come soon again for a day ; a short meeting of this kind is always very fruitful.

I am correcting now a division of Cellini. If you have a copy of that which is expected in the next number, I beg you to send it to me.

I close for this once, and wish you farewell.

WEIMAR, 18th Jan., 1797.

G.

CCLXIII.

JENA, 24th January, 1797.

ONLY two words for to-day. I hoped, after your last letter, to have seen you here some days since. These few fair days have tempted me again into the air and done me good. My work, however, gets on at present slowly, because I am just in the most difficult crisis. I see now

clearly, that I cannot show you anything until my own mind is fully made up upon every part. You cannot put me at one with myself, but you shall help me to put myself in harmony with the object. Therefore what I lay before you must be my whole; I don't mean my whole piece, but my whole idea of it. The radical difference of our natures in regard to manner, admits of no other truly profitable communication than when the whole confronts the whole; it is true that in details I shall not be able to lead you astray, because you rest more firmly upon yourself than I do, but you would be able easily to overturn me. But more of this verbally.

Do come right soon. I send herewith the latest of Cellini which was recently forgotten.

All greet you. Humboldt's wife suffers much in her confinement, and it will be wearisome.

Farewell.

SCH.

CCLXV.

Sunday, 29th January, 1797.

At least a hasty sheet shall be dedicated to you this evening, in order that you may know in general how I am getting on.

I have this week brought about several important contracts. First, I have succeeded in getting Demoiselle Jagamann for the Court here and the Theatre; she is engaged as Court-singer, and will often sing in the operas, whereby our stage acquires quite a new life. Further, I have also disposed of my epic poem,* on which occasion some pleasant incidents occurred.

* Herrmann and Dorothea.

That in such circumstances no æsthetic mood is to be thought of, you will easily understand; meanwhile the tables of colors unite themselves together better and better, and in observations of organic beings I have not been idle; in these long nights quite extraordinary lights shine in on me; I hope they wont turn out to be jack-o'-lanthorn.

Give many greetings to Humboldt, and beg him to pardon me that I have not yet sent the books relating to Italy; they shall come on Wednesday.

Of *Xenial* matters I have for some time heard nothing; in the world in which I live, nothing literary resounds either before or after the blow; the moment of striking is the only one that is noted. In a few days I shall know whether I can come to you for a longer time, or whether I shall make again only a momentary visit.

Farewell; greetings from me to all around you, and stick to Wallenstein as much as you possibly can.

G.

CCLXVI.

JENA, 31st January, 1797.

I WISH you joy of the good acquisition for the opera, and in regard to the epic work, I hope you have fallen into good hands. The work will have a brilliant sale, and with such writings the publisher ought not reasonably to seek to make a profit, but content himself with honor. He can grow rich with bad books.

As we are speaking of mercantile matters, let me communicate to you an idea that I have just now much at heart. I am now obliged to hurry in the choice of our abode, as a summer-house is for sale here, which would

suit me, if I wished to continue to live here. As I must have a view upon a garden, and such an opportunity could scarcely again occur, I must decide at once.

But now there are various out-weighing reasons why I would rather reside in Weimar, and could I there find a dwelling of the same kind, I should prefer it. According to all the inquiries that I have had made, this will be difficult. As you lately spoke of your summer-house, and thought it had room enough, I should like to know if you could perhaps spare it for a longer time and regularly let it to me. It is besides a pity that it stands there without giving any interest, and I would thereby be helped very much.

Were you not indisposed to it, and the house were in the essential things fit for a summer and winter habitation, we could easily agree upon the changes that might still be necessary.

As regards the garden, I would answer for my people that nothing should be injured.

The distance would not frighten me : for my wife an outward necessity to take exercise is very healthful, and as it regards myself, I hope, after some trials in the open air, to be able also to rely more on myself.

For the present I would wish merely to know whether you would be inclined for such an arrangement ; the rest would then depend on a nearer examination.

Farewell. All send regards.

SCH.

CCLXVII.

AT last you receive from me once more a contribution, and indeed a pretty thick package of Cellini ; now there is

but one left, and I wish that we may again hit upon something as good. I add also some *Lenziana*. Whether and how some of this is to be used, you will judge. At all events, let these strange sheets lie until we shall have once more talked thereon.

My summer-house would be entirely at your service, but it is only a summer residence for a few persons. As I myself lived in it for so long a time, and also know your mode of living, I can say with certainty that it will not lodge you, the rather as I have had the wash-kitchen and wood-house torn down, which to a somewhat larger household are absolutely indispensable. There are other circumstances relating to it which I will tell you verbally.

The garden in Jena to be sold is that of Schmidt, is it not? If it is habitable, you ought to take it. When once your brother-in-law is established here, one could be on the look-out for a vacant lodging, and as real estate is constantly rising, you could always get rid of it again without loss. At present, such quarters as you wish are in no way to be found.

From Rome I have received an extraordinary essay, which will perhaps do for the *Horen*. Its author is the formerly so-called painter, Mueller, and it is directed against Fernow. In the principles which he sets up, he is quite right, he says much that is sound, true and good; the essay is also in parts well written, but is upon the whole somewhat feeble, and in individual passages the mark is not quite hit. I am having the little work copied, and will then give it to you. As he wishes to be named, it could therefore be printed with his name, and at the end a note be added, whereby one would take a middle position, and open a kind of *pro* and *contra*. Mr. Fernow might

then express his rightful needs in the *Mercury*, Mr. Mueller in the *Horen*, and there would be an opportunity to show up with a few words the various sillinesses which Mr. Fernow puts forth with great freedom in the *Mercury*.

Thank Körner right well for the Duet he sent and the catalogue; the former is already translated and in the Theatre.

Farewell. My winter sky is clearing up, and I hope to be with you soon; everything goes on prosperously with me and I wish you the same.

WEIMAR, 1st February, 1797.

G.

CCLXVIII.

JENA, 2d Feb., 1797.

You have quite revived me with the package of yesterday, for I have never been in such a strait to keep the *Horen* afloat as now. The work of Painter Mueller will be very acceptable to me; he certainly is an unexpected and new personage, and it will also help us very much if a controversy is opened in the *Horen*. The *Lenziana*, so far as I have looked into them, contain very odd stuff, but the re-appearance of this manner of feeling in these times will surely not be without interest, particularly as the death and the unhappy life of the author have extinguished all envy, and these fragments must always have a biographical and pathological value.

As a successor of Cellini, Vieilleville would be very useful, only it would be necessary to make extracts instead of translating the whole. If you yourself don't wish to undertake it, and know of nothing else that has bulk, I will then go about Vieilleville, and beg you to send it to me for that purpose.

I am very sorry that my little plan in regard to your summer-house is not practicable. It will be against my will if I remain here ; for when Humboldt is once gone, I am entirely alone, and my wife likewise is without society. I will make one more effort and inquire whether the summer-house of Privy-Counsellor Schmidt is not for sale ; for even were it in its present condition not habitable, I could, were it my own, have it put in order, which is what I should have to do with that of Professor Schmidt here.

Farewell, and come as soon as you can.

SCH.

CCLXIX.

AFTER a very dusty and crowded ball, I can only say a few words to you.

In the first place, I send here the work of Painter Mueller copied ; I have not been able to look through it again, and therefore lay the original with it. As you don't want to use it immediately, we will confer about it together once more, and you must consider well whether something is to be done with the style. Unfortunately he compares himself with perfect justice to a spirit that speaks on compulsion, only he does not express himself so lightly and airily as Ariel. Much you will find is written altogether in accordance with our views, and also, imperfect as it is, such a public, unsought, unprepared conformity is valuable. After all it is just a stone which we throw into our neighbor's garden ; if it makes a little rattling, what does it signify ? Even if there really is anything in Fernow, it must be brought out by opposition, for his German subjectivity sounds only the more marked and absurd from Rome.

Secondly, I send you a Canto of a strange poem. As I know the author, this misleads me in judging. What say you? Do you think he has poetic talent? There is in it a certain free, graceful view of the world and a pretty youthfulness; but to be sure all mere matter, and as it seems to me no trace of a comprehensive form. Supposing that there were a poetic school, in which could be explained, at least, to the understanding of such a young man, the chief beauties and requirements of poetry, what do you believe could be drawn out of a nature like this? At present I know not what advice to give him, except that he should make smaller things.

My prospect for remaining with you for a longer time is again deferred. The establishing of Dem. Jagamann, and her introduction on the theatre, makes my presence highly necessary; yet nothing shall easily prevent me from coming to you Sunday the 12th; we shall have a full moon, and returning need not fear the rugged valley of the mill.

I will send Vieilleville, for I cannot undertake anything new. Perhaps the idea of a tale that has come into my head will unfold itself further. It is only too matter of fact, thence I don't altogether take to it; if, however, I can give the little vessel a good chase on the ocean of the imagination, there will perhaps be a tolerable composition, which will please people better than if it were better. The tale with the little woman in the box smiles at me again sometimes, but it won't yet get quite ripe.

For the rest all my wishes are now directed towards the completion of the Poem, and I am obliged forcibly to hold my thoughts back from it, in order that the details become not too distinct at moments when I cannot execute them.

Fare you right well, and let me know something of your mood and your labors.

WEIMAR, 4th February, 1797.

G.

CCLXX.

7th February, 1797.

THESE last carrier's days you have sent me such a wealth of things, that I have not been able to get through with the inspection of them, especially as on the one hand a garden that I am bargaining for, and on the other, a love-scene in my second Act, move my head in very different directions.

Meanwhile I have at once set about the paper of Painter Mueller, which, in a heavy and harsh diction, contains very much that is excellent, and after due alterations in the style, will make a capital contribution to the *Horen*.

In the new piece of Cellini, I have heartily enjoyed myself over the casting of the Perseus. The siege of Troy and of Mantua cannot be a greater event or be related more pathetically than this history.

About the Epos which you sent me I shall be able to say more to you when you come. What I have already read in it, confirms to me your judgment. It is the production of a lively and flexible fancy, but this flexibility is stretched to such an extreme, that absolutely everything swims and melts away without one's being able to seize hold of anything of a permanent form. With this throughout predominant character of pleasant multifariousness and graceful play, I should have ascribed it to a female author had it fallen accidentally into my hands. It is rich in matter, and yet it seems to have remarkably little substance. Now I believe what I call substance can alone become capable of

form ; what I here call matter appears to me to be hardly or never compatible therewith.

No doubt you have now also read the Wielandian oration against the *Xenia*. What say you to it ? Nothing is wanting but that it had appeared in the Imperial Gazette.

Of my work and my mood for it I can just now say little, as I am in the crisis, and collect together the best that is in me in order to get well through it. In so far I am glad that the cause that prevents you from coming hither, falls just in this month, in which I have most need of isolating myself.

Shall I send your Elegy to the press now, that it may come before the public in the beginning of April ?

For the Tale I wish soon a right favorable mood. Farewell ; we rejoice that we shall see you on Sunday.

SCH.

CCLXXI.

I AM glad that you can await the æsthetic crisis in your secluded state ; I am like a ball that one hour throws to the other. In the early part of the day, I endeavor to work at the last portion of Cellini. The casting of the Perseus is in truth one of the illuminated points, as is likewise the whole work at the statue, until at last nature, art, handicraft, passion, and accident, all are together in operation, and make as it were the work of art into a natural production.

I am succeeding at present in some good observations on the metamorphosis of insects. The caterpillars that changed to the chrysalis state last September in Jena come out now by degrees as butterflies, because I kept them in the winter in a warm room, and I try to surprise

them on the way to this new transformation. If I only continue my observations one year more, I shall have run over a considerable space ; for I already find myself often again in perfectly well-known spots.

I hope that the negociation for the summer-house may succeed. If you have any building to do on it, my advice is at your service.

The Wielandian demonstration I have not yet seen, nor have I heard anything about it ; it is to be presumed that he has kept in the wholesome middle road. Farewell ; I hope still to come on Sunday ; Saturday evening you shall know certainly.

WEIMAR, 8th Feb., 1797.

G.

CCLXXII.

9th February, 1797.

WITHIN a few days I came across again the letter of Meyer, in which he describes the first part of his journey to Nurnberg. This letter pleases me much, and if three or four others could be added to it, it would make an agreeable contribution for the *Horen*, and Meyer might moreover take the few Louis d'or. I here send you the copy.

A book by Nicolai has come out in Berlin against the *Xenia* ; I haven't, however, had a sight of it.

I have now made a second offer for my Smith garden, 1150 rix dollars, and hope to get it for 1200. It is at present merely a light summer-house, and will cost a hundred dollars more to be habitable even in summer ; but this improvement of my existence is worth everything to me. When I am once in possession, and you are here, we will beg you to advise and help us.

All else verbally. I hope certainly to see you the day after to-morrow, but I send at any rate the Journal to-day.

Pray have the enclosed delivered to Herder.

The commission to my brother-in-law has been attended to.

Farewell.

SCH.

CCLXXIII.

THE *Horen* I have received, and thank you for the dispatch. To-morrow I shall be with you, and we can talk over many things together: I go away, indeed, in the evening, but hope in eight days to come again for a longer time.

To that confounded Nicolai nothing could be more welcome than to be only once more attacked; with him is always *bonus odor ex re qualibet*, and the money that the volume brings in is not at all distasteful to him. These gentlemen, one and all, owe us thanks that we give them an opportunity to fill some sheets and to get paid for it, without great outlay of productive force.

Don't fail to make sure of the garden; I like the situation much; besides its pleasantness, it is moreover a very healthy spot. Fare you right well. I look forward with pleasure to to-morrow, I shall dine with you, but alone. Privy-Counsellor Voight, who comes with me, will stop at Hufeland's, and in the afternoon we shall cross visits.

WEIMAR, 11th February, 1797.

G.

CCLXXXIV.

OUT of the late variety and sociableness, I am all at once transplanted into the greatest solitude, and thrown back upon myself. Besides you and Humboldt, all female society has deserted me, and I employ this quiet in reflect-

ing on my tragico-dramatic duties. At the same time I have planned a detailed *scenarium* of the entire Wallenstein, in order to facilitate for me mechanically through the eyes the survey of the points of time and of the connection of the parts.

I find, the more I reflect on my own work, and on the mode of treatment in tragedy among the Greeks, that the whole *cardo rei* in art lies in the invention of a poetic fable. The modern frets himself laboriously and anxiously with accidents and accessories, and in the struggle to get right close to reality, he burdens himself with the empty and insignificant, and thereby he runs the risk of losing deep-buried truth, wherein strictly lies all the poetical. He would like to imitate perfectly a real case, and does not reflect that a poetic representation never can coincide with the reality, for the very reason that it is absolutely true.

Within a few days I have read *Philoctetes* and the *Trachinian Women*, and the latter with great enjoyment. How admirably is the whole situation, the feeling, the existence of Dejanira seized! How entirely is she the housewife of Hercules! How individual, how solely suited to this single case is this picture, and yet how deeply human, how eternally true and universal! In *Philoctetes*, likewise, everything is extracted from the situation that could be extracted from it, and yet by the side of this individuality of circumstance, all at last reposes on the eternal ground of human nature.

It struck me that the characters of the Greek Tragedy are more or less ideal masks and not genuine individuals, as I find them in Shakspeare and in your pieces. Thus, for example, Ulysses, in *Ajax* and in *Philoctetes*, is obviously only the ideal of cunning, narrow-souled prudence,

that is never embarrassed as to its means ; thus Creon, in *Œdipus* and in *Antigone*, is merely cold, kingly dignity. With such characters in tragedy one succeeds evidently much better ; they unfold themselves more rapidly, and their features are more permanent and firmer. Truth suffers nothing thereby, because they are as opposite to mere logical entities as to mere individuals.

I send you here, *pour la bonne bouche*, a most charming fragment out of Aristophanes, which Humboldt left me. It is delightful, I wish to have the rest of it also.

A few days since I was surprised by a large magnificent sheet of parchment from Stockholm. I thought, as I opened the diploma with its great wax seal, that a pension at the least would jump out of it ; after all, it was merely a diploma from the Academy of Sciences. However, it always gives pleasure when one extends his roots and sees his existence acting upon others.

I hope soon to receive from you a new piece of Cellini.

Fare you right well, my dear, my ever dear friend. I am still surrounded by the beautiful spirits which you left me here, and I hope ever to become more familiar with them. Fare you right well.

JENA, 4th April, 1797.

SCH.

CCLXXXV.

WITH me it is just the reverse. Directly upon the collected life I had in Jena, I have been plunged into a diversified activity with all kinds of small affairs, which for a good while will pull me hither and thither ; meanwhile I will do a variety of things, for which I don't require the purest mood.

You are quite right that in the figures of ancient poetry, as in sculpture, there appears an *abstractum*, that can only attain its elevation through what is called style. There are also *abstracta* through manner, as with the French. On the success of the Fable everything indeed depends; one is safe as to the chief expenditure, the majority of readers and spectators after all take in nothing else, and to the poet remains the whole merit of an animated execution, which can be the better sustained the better the fable is. Therefore will we also, in future, test more carefully than hitherto what is to be undertaken.

Here comes the first part of Vieilleville, the others I can send by degrees.

Greet your dear wife; unhappily I did not see her during her stay here.

I congratulate you on the diploma; such manifestations, as barometrical indices of public opinion, are not to be despised.

Farewell, and write me oftener; although for a while I shall be a bad correspondent.

WEIMAR, 5th April, 1797.

G.

CCLXXXVI.

JENA, 7th April, 1797.

AMONG some cabalistic and astrological works which I have had out of the library here, I found a dialogue on Love, translated from the Hebrew into Latin, which has not only amused me very much, but has also advanced me greatly in my astrological knowledge. The mixture of chemical, mythological, and astronomical things, is here made on a grand scale, and is all ready for poetic use. Some remarkably ingenious comparisons of the planets

with human limbs I have had extracted for you. One has no idea of this kind of extravagance until one hears the people themselves. I am, however, not without hope of giving to this astrological material a poetic dignity.

As to the subject of the treatment of characters, touched upon in my last, I shall be glad, when we next meet, with your help, to bring my ideas out fully and clearly. The matter rests on the inmost ground of art, and no doubt observations drawn from the plastic arts can explain much in poetry. In Shakspeare, likewise, it was to me very striking to-day, as I went through Julius Cæsar with Schlegel, how he treats the common people with such an uncommon greatness. Here, in representing the character of the people, the material itself forced him to have in his eye a poetical *abstractum* rather than individuals, and therefore I find him here remarkably near to the Greeks. If to such a scene one were to bring too anxious a thought about imitation of the real, the mass and multitude would embarrass one not a little with their insignificance; but with a bold grasp Shakspeare takes a few figures, I might say a few voices, out of the mass, and lets them pass for the whole people, and they really do pass for it, so happily has he chosen.

A great service would be done to poets and artists, if it could only once be clearly settled what art should take from, or let drop from, reality. The ground would be better lighted and cleaner, the little and insignificant would disappear, and there would be room for the broad and great. Already in the treatment of history is this point of the greatest importance, and I know how much the undefined notion in regard to it has given me to do.

I long to receive soon some of Cellini, if possible in

time for the April number, in which case I must have it in hand between to-day and Wednesday evening.

Farewell. My wife sends best regards. I have to-day a heavy post-day, else I would write more.

Sch.

CCLXXXVII.

MR. HUMBOLDT, who doesn't go away until to-morrow morning, sends kindest greetings to you, and begs you to have the inclosed letter delivered immediately.

Upon the last Cantos we have held a very strict prosodian court, and purified them as much as was possible. The first will now soon be written anew, and look very neat with their double inscriptions. I hope to send them off next week.

You shall also receive before Wednesday a part of Cellini, in twelve written sheets. There will then remain about six for the conclusion.

For the rest I am in the midst of a good deal of confusion, and shall be able to effect little in the next fortnight.

The astrological conjunctions of which you inform me are strange enough; I am anxious to see what kind of use you will make of this material.

I wish soon to talk over again with you further the subject that interests us both so much. Those advantages whereof I availed myself in my last poem, I learnt all from plastic art. For in a work that stands bodily before my eyes, the whole visible at the same moment, what is superfluous is far more striking than in a work that passes before the eyes of the mind in the succession of time. In the Theatre one would perceive great advantage in this.

Thus recently it struck me that on our stage, when groups are thought of, none other are ever produced but sentimental or pathetic ones, although there are a hundred others that can be conceived. Within a few days some scenes in Aristophanes appeared to me precisely like antique bas-reliefs, and were no doubt represented in that sense. In the whole, and in details, all depends upon this, viz. : that everything be separated from every other thing, that no moment be like another ; as with characters, that they be notably distinct from one another, but yet always belong to one species.

Fare you well, and work right diligently. So soon as I get a little breathing time, I will think about the Almanac.

WEIMAR, 8th April, 1797.

G.

CCLXXXVIII.

JENA, 12th April, 1797.

I SAY to you only two words as a greeting. Our little Ernest has the small-pox fever very badly, and has much alarmed us to-day with frequent epileptic cramps ; we expect a very restless night, and I am not without fears.

Perhaps to-morrow I shall be able to write more with a lightened heart. Farewell. My wife greets you kindly. Don't fail to send Cellini.

SCH.

CCLXXXIX.

MAY little Ernest soon get through the dangerous crisis, and relieve your anxiety.

Here follows Cellini, who, in one more small contribution, will soon take his final leave. Whilst looking into

the patriarchal remains in the Old Testament, I have again been struck with astonishment at the confusion and the contradictions of the five books of Moses, which, to be sure, as it is well known, may have been put together out of a hundred different written and oral traditions. On the journey of the children of Israel in the wilderness, I have made some quaint remarks, and the audacious thought has arisen in me, whether the long time they are said to have passed in it be not of a later invention. I will take an opportunity of communicating to you, in a small Essay, what has brought me to this idea.

Fare you well, and greet Humboldt with the delivery of the accompanying Berlin Monthly Journal, and give me soon good news of you and yours.

WEIMAR, 12th April, 1797.

G.

CCXC.

LITTLE Ernest is better, and seems to have surmounted the danger. The small-pox has come out, the cramps also have disappeared. The case was made much worse by the cutting of teeth, for one tooth came out at the very same time with the first fever, and another is just now breaking through. You will readily believe that in these few days, what with the danger at first, and now the crying of the dear child, I have not been able to do much. Neither can I move into the summer-house until all is in order again with the child.

Your discoveries in the five Books amuse me much. Don't fail to write down your thoughts ; you may not come that road again soon. As well as I recollect, you have already had, some twenty years since, a war with the New Testament. I must acknowledge, that, in all that is

historical, my unbelief in those records is so decided, that your doubts as to a single fact appear to me very reasonable. To me, the Bible is only true where it is naïf; everywhere else, where it is written with consciousness, I fear a design and a later origin.

Cellini I did not receive early enough the day before yesterday, to be able to read it entirely through before sending it away; I have, however, been again delighted with it, particularly with the pilgrimage, which he gets up in his joy over the achieved and song-honored work.

* * * * *

Farewell, and free yourself soon from the affairs that draw your mind off from productive work.

JENA, 14th April, 1797.

SCH.

CCXCI.

THROUGH Humboldt I have already heard that your Ernest is out of danger, and in my mind have rejoiced thereat; now I heartily wish you joy at his recovery.

The Oratorio, yesterday, was right well performed, and I was able to make several observations on Historic Art. It is a great pity that we cannot enjoy in company such opportunities, for we should then strengthen ourselves much quicker in the one thing that is needful.

On Monday the first four *Muses** depart; meanwhile I am very busy with the last five, and now particularly avail myself of friend Humboldt's prosodiocal remarks.

At the same time, I have continued to accompany the

* He refers to the sending off for publication of the first four Cantos of *Herrmann and Dorothea*, the nine Cantos of which are named after the Muses.

children of Israel in the desert, and, with your principles, I can hope that some of these days my Essay on Moses will find favor in your eyes. My critico-historico-poetic work goes to show, that the books extant contradict and betray each other, and my whole sport consists in separating the humanly probable from the designed and the merely imagined, and yet to discover everywhere proofs in support of my opinion. All hypothesis of this kind misleads merely through the naturalness of the thought, and through the manifoldness of the phenomena on which it is grounded. It is right well for me to have once more for a short time something with which I can with interest in the proper sense play. Poetry, as for some time past we have pursued it, is far too earnest an occupation. Fare you right well, and rejoice in the beautiful season.

WEIMAR, 15th April, 1797.

G.

CCXCIII.

I REJOICE exceedingly that you are freed from anxiety on account of the child, and hope that he will continue to get better. Give my kindest greetings to your dear wife.

I am now studying in great haste the Old Testament and Homer; I read at the same time Eichhorn's Introduction to the former, and Wolf's Prolegomena to the latter. Some extraordinary ideas spring up in me on the occasion, whereupon we shall hereafter have much to talk.

Do write as soon as you can your plan of Wallenstein, and let me know it. With my present studies, an examination of such a plan will be very interesting to me, and also be of use to you.

A thought on the epic poem I will at once communicate to you. As such a poem ought to be listened to in the greatest repose and ease of mind, therefore the understanding perhaps makes more demands on it than on other kinds of poetry, and I was astonished, on reading the *Odyssey* through this time, to see those very demands of the understanding so fully satisfied. Now, if we consider with attention, what is related of the ancient grammarians and critics, as well as of their talent and character, we see plainly that they were men of understanding, who did not rest until those great narrations harmonized with their mode of conception. And thus are we, as also Wolf endeavors to show, indebted for our present Homer to the Alexandrians, which no doubt gives to these poems a quite other aspect.

One more special remark. Some verses in Homer, which are pronounced to be certainly not genuine and quite new, are of the same kind as some which I myself interpolated into my poem, after it was finished, in order to make the whole clearer and more intelligible, and to prepare betimes future events. I am very curious to see what I shall be inclined to add to or to take from my poem, when I shall have got through with my present studies.

A chief quality of the epic poem is, that it goes always forward and back; thence, all retarding sources are epic. They must not, however, be downright obstacles; these belong properly in the Drama.

Should this requisition of retardment—which is thoroughly fulfilled by both the Homeric poems, and which also lay in the plan of mine—be really essential, and not to be dispensed with, then all plans that stride right forward to the end would be entirely to be rejected, or to be

looked upon as a subordinate historic species. The plan of my second poem has this fault, if it be one, and I shall take care not to write down so much as a verse of it until we have got to a perfectly clear understanding of this point. The idea seems to me singularly fruitful. If it is just, it must bring us much further, and I will willingly sacrifice everything to it.

With the Drama, it seems to me to be the reverse ; but, of this, more the next time. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 19th April, 1797.

G.

CCXCIV.

I WISHED to write you many things upon your last letter, which has given me much to think of, but some business, that takes me away unexpectedly this evening, prevents me. Therefore only a few words for to-day.

From all that you say, it becomes more and more clear to me, that the independent existence of its parts forms a chief characteristic of the epic poem. Naked truth, drawn out of the inmost sources, is the object of the epic poet : he depicts to us merely the tranquil existence and working of things according to their natures ; his object lies already in each point of his movement ; therefore we hasten not impatiently to an aim, but linger with affection at every step. He preserves to us the highest freedom of the mind, and in giving us this great advantage he thereby renders his own work the more difficult ; for we now make on him all the demands that are founded in the integrity and in the all-sided united activity of our powers. Quite the contrary, the tragic poet robs us of our mental freedom, and inasmuch as he directs and concentrates our

activity on one single side he simplifies to himself very much his work, and sets himself on a vantage-ground, while he puts us at a disadvantage.

Your idea of the returning march of the epic poem is perfectly clear to me. But I do not yet quite understand, from what I know of your *Epopee*, that this quality is wanting in it.

Your further results, particularly for the Drama, I await with great eagerness. In the meantime I will more maturely reflect on what has been already said.

Farewell. My little patient continues to do right bravely in spite of the bad weather. My wife greets you cordially.

JENA, 21st April, 1797.

SCH.

CCXCV.

A FEW more words on some points of your former letter.

Woltmann's *Universal History* is verily an extraordinary work. The introduction lies entirely out of my circle of vision; of the Egyptian existence I cannot judge, but how in the treatment of Jewish history he could accept the Old Testament as it stands, without the slightest comment, as a pure source of events, is to me incomprehensible. The whole work is built on sand, and is a perfect prodigy, when one reflects that Eichhorn's *Introduction* is already ten years old, and that Herder's works have had effect much longer. Of the unreasonable opponents of these ancient writings I will even not so much as speak.

* * * * *

I hope that you may soon get into your summer-house, and be tranquillized on all sides.

My best greetings to your dear wife, as well as to Humboldt, to whom I wish a speedy recovery.

WEIMAR, 22d April, 1797.

G.

CCXCVI.

JENA, 25th April, 1797.

THAT the demand for retardation results from a higher epic law, which, however, can be satisfied in another manner, seems to me beyond doubt. I believe also that there are two modes of retarding; the one consists in the nature of the way, the other in the manner of going it, and this latter, it seems to me, is perfectly practicable, even where the way is the straightest, and consequently also with a plan such as yours is.

I should not, however, express that higher epic law altogether as you have done. In the formula, that only the *how* and not the *what* is to be considered, it seems to me to be much too general, and to be applicable to all pragmatic kinds of poetry without distinction. My view thereupon, briefly expressed, is this. Both the epic and the dramatic poet represent to us an action, only that with the latter the action is itself the object, with the former it is a mere means to an absolute æsthetic object. Out of this principle I can fully explain to myself why the tragic poet must stride forward more rapidly and directly, why the epic finds his account more in a loitering gait. It follows also from this, as it seems to me, that the epic does well to abstain from such subjects as powerfully rouse for themselves the feelings, whether of curiosity or of sympathy, in which case, then, the action interests too much as an end to keep itself within the bounds of a mere means. I acknowledge that I in some measure fear this latter in

your new poem, although I can trust whatever is possible to your poetic mastery of the subject.

The manner in which you wish to develop your action seems to me to belong rather to comedy than to the epos. At least you will have much to do to take from it what excites surprise and wonder, because this is not strictly epic.

I await your plan with great eagerness. I am inclined to have some doubt about it, because it made the same impression on Humboldt as on me, notwithstanding we had previously had no communication together in regard to it. For he thinks that the plan is wanting in individual epic action. When you first spoke to me of it, I kept waiting for the action proper; all that you related to me seemed to me to be only the introduction to such an action between a few chief personages, and when I believed that now this action is going to open, you had finished. It is true, I well understand that the genus to which the subject belongs rather quits the individual, and obliges you to go into the collective and aim at a whole, as the hero in it is after all the understanding, which embraces much more under it than it contains in itself.

For the rest, be the epic quality of your new poem what it may, it will, at all events, compared with your Herrmann, be another genus, and should therefore the Herrmann be a pure expression of the epic *genus* and not merely of an epic *species*, it would thence follow that the new poem were so much the more *epic*. But that is just what you wanted to know, whether the Herrmann represents one kind of epic or the whole genus, and we therefore come back to the question.

I would call your new poem a comic-epic, if, be it un-

derstood, we leave entirely out of view the common contracted and empiric notion of comedy and the comic-heroic poem. Your new poem, it appears to me, stands related to comedy in about the same degree that the Herrmann does to tragedy : with this difference, that with the latter the relationship is more through the subject, with the former through the treatment.

But I will first wait for your plan in order to say more thereon.

What say you to the news of the Regensburg peace ? If you know anything decisive do inform us of it.

Farewell.

SCH.

CCXCVII.

THE news of peace is true. Just as the French had re-entered Frankfort, and were hand to hand with the Austrians, came a courier, who brought the news of peace ; hostilities immediately ceased, and the Generals on both sides dined with the Burgomaster in the red house. Thus have the people of Frankfort for their money and suffering at any rate witnessed a *coup de théâtre*, the like of which doesn't often occur in history, and we too shall have lived to see this important epoch. We will see what will accrue to parts and to the whole through this change.

With what you say in your to-day's letter on the Dramas and Epos I agree perfectly ; just as I am accustomed always to have you relate and explain to me my dreams. I can add nothing further, but I must send you my plan or bring it myself. Some very subtle points will come up, of which just now in general I prefer to say nothing. If the

subject shall not be adjudged to be purely epic, although it is in more than one sense important and interesting, we must be able to discern in what other form it ought to be handled. Fare you well ; enjoy your garden and the recovery of your little boy.

With Humboldt I have passed the time very agreeably and profitably ; my labors in Natural History have, by his presence, been again waked up out of their winter sleep ; if they only don't fall again soon into a spring sleep !

WEIMAR, 26th April, 1797.

G.

I cannot, however, refrain from putting one question more about our dramatic-epic affair. What say you to the following positions ?

In Tragedy, Fate, or what is the same thing, the determined nature of man, which leads him blindly hither or thither, can and should rule and govern ; it must never lead him off to his aim, the Hero should not become master of his understanding, the understanding ought not to enter at all into tragedy, except with subordinate personages, to the disadvantage of the chief hero, &c.

In the Epos it is directly the reverse ; merely the understanding, as in the Odyssey, or a compliant passion, as in the Iliad, are epic agents. The voyage of the Argonauts, as an adventure, is not epic.

CCXCVIII.

OF what you call the best dramatic subject (where, namely, the exposition is itself a part of the development) there is, for example, an instance in the twins of Shakspeare. I do not know of a similar example in tragedy,

although the *Ædipus rex* approaches astonishingly near to this ideal. But I can very well conceive of dramatic subjects in which the exposition is at the same time also advancement of the action. Macbeth is of this kind; I can also name the Robbers.

To the epic poet I would not even allow an exposition; at least, not in the sense of that of the dramatic. As he does not urge us onward towards the end as the dramatic poet does, therefore the beginning and the end approach one another much nearer in dignity and importance, and the exposition must interest us, not because it leads to something, but because itself is something. I think that in this far more indulgence should be shown to the dramatic poet; for the very reason that he places his object in the sequel and at the end, he may be permitted to treat the beginning more as a means. He stands under the category of causality, the epic poet under that of substantiality; with the dramatist one thing may and should exist as the cause of some other thing, with the epic writer everything must make itself tell for its own sake.

To-morrow at last I hope to take possession of my garden. The little boy is entirely restored, and the disease, it seems, has given greater firmness to his health.

Humboldt went to-day; for several years I shall not see him again, and it is hardly to be expected that we shall ever again see one another just as we now are on parting. So there is again a relation that is to be looked upon as closed and as not to be repeated; for two years, lived so differently, will change a great deal in us, and therefore, also, between us.

SCH.

CCXCIX.

YESTERDAY, as I was reflecting on the fable of my new poem, in order to write it down for you, a quite peculiar affection for this work seized hold of me anew, which, after all that has in the meanwhile passed between us, is a favorable indication. Now as I know that I never get through with a thing if I have in any way confided or disclosed to anybody the plan of the work, I prefer to withhold for a while this communication from you; we will discuss the matter on general grounds, and I can by myself test my subject by the result of our discussion. Should I continue to have the courage and disposition, I would work it out, and when finished, it would give me more matter for reflection than in the plan; should I despair of the execution, there will always be time to make known to you only the idea.

Have you read Schlegel's treatise on the epic poem, in the eleventh Number of *Germany* of last year? Do read it. It is singular how he, being as a man of good head in the right road, does nevertheless soon stop it up again himself. Because the epic poem cannot have *dramatic unity*, because such a unity cannot be exactly discovered in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,—but they rather according to the more recent idea are declared to be more dismembered than they really are,—therefore the epic poem should neither have nor require any unity; that is to say, according to my conception, it should cease to be a poem. And these are put forth as clear views, which, in fact, are contradicted even by experience, if one observes closely. For the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, even though they may have passed through the hands of a thousand poets and editors, show the powerful tendency of poetical and critical nature towards unity.

And after all this new Schlegelian performance is only for the benefit of the Wolfian opinion, which does not at all require such support. For because those great poems grew into being by degrees, and that it has not been possible to bring them to any full and perfect unity (although both perhaps are far more perfectly organized than is thought), therefore it does not follow that such a poem cannot and should not in any wise become full, perfect and one.

In the meanwhile I have made out of your letters a short article on our past intercommunications; do go on and work the matter more fully out; it is to us, both in a theoretical and practical view, at the present the most important.

I have again read through, with the greatest pleasure, Aristotle's Art of Poetry; the Understanding* is a glorious

* As this term, used in the same sense, occurs several times in the letters, it will be perhaps well, for the facility of those who are not familiar with German thought, to explain, so far as can be done in a few words, its philosophical meaning. In the German systems the two general divisions of the mind are the *Vernunft*, which we are obliged to translate, although unsatisfactorily, by *reason*, and the *Verstand*, or *understanding*. The *Vernunft* embraces all the emotions of the soul, the religious, the moral and the poetical, through which alone in co-operation with the reasoning intellect, can the deepest truths be revealed. The *Verstand*, or Understanding, embraces the whole intellect, unconnected with, and uninspired by the emotions, and moreover all the lower or animal nature of man. These definitions are illustrated by a remark of Coleridge, who says that Aristotle represents the Understanding and Plato the pure Reason. The thought of Goethe here is, that such a manifestation of the Understanding as is made in this work of Aristotle is a very high, though not the highest exhibition of human powers.

thing in its highest manifestation. It is very remarkable how Aristotle relies merely on experience, and thereby, if you choose, becomes a little too natural ; but therefore, also, appears mostly so much the more solid. It was also very refreshing to me to read with what liberality he takes the poets under his protection against the impertinent and captious, insists only on what is essential, and in everything else is so lax that I have been astonished at more than one passage. His whole view of the art of poetry, and particularly of those departments to which he is partial, is so animating that I shall ere long take him in hand again, especially on account of some important passages which are not quite clear, and the meaning of which I should like to search out. One finds, however, no explanation about the epic poem in the sense in which we wish it.

I am recruiting myself at present from the disturbing occupations of the past month, and am putting various matters of business into order, or on one side, so that I may have the month of May free. If it is possible to me I will visit you. In the meanwhile fare you well.

WEIMAR, 28th April, 1797.

G.

ccc.

JUST as I had set myself down in the evening to answer your two dear letters, I was interrupted by a visit from the Prince of Rudolstadt, who is here on account of the inoculation of his children, and as soon as I got rid of this, I had a visit from the Humboldts. It is now ten o'clock at night, and I can merely send you a friendly greeting. Sunday evening more. Farewell.

JENA, 28th April, 1797.

SCH.

CCCI.

JENA, 2d May, 1797.

I SALUTE you from my garden, which I got into to-day. Around me is a beautiful landscape, the sun is setting with a friendly look, and the nightingales are singing. Everything about me gladdens me, and my first evening on my own ground is of the happiest omen.

This is, however, all that I can write to-day, for my head is distracted with arranging things. To-morrow I hope to go again to work with hearty good will, and to keep at it.

If you would send me the text of Don Juan for a few days, you would do me a favor. I have the idea to make a ballad out of it, and as I am only acquainted with the tale by hearsay, I should like to know how it is treated.

Fare you well. I heartily rejoice in the prospect of soon again passing some time with you.

SCH.

CCCIH.

I SEND you the second part of Vieilleville and the Don Juan you request. The thought to make a ballad out of it is very happy. The universally known story, placed in a new light through a poetic treatment, such as you have at command, will have a good effect.

I wish you joy of the new dwelling, and will hasten to visit you in it as soon as possible.

I send you also Aristotle, wish you much pleasure from it, and say no more for to-day.

G.

CCCVI.

I AM very well satisfied with Aristotle, and not only with him, but also with myself; it does not often happen that one does not lose one's inward peace after reading such a sober head and cold lawgiver. Aristotle is a real Minos to all those who either adhere slavishly to outward form, or who set themselves above all form. The first he must drive into constant contradictions through his vitality and spirit, for it is obvious how much more importance he attaches to the essence than to all outward form; and to the latter the severity must be frightful with which he derives from the nature of the poem, and particularly of tragedy, its immutable form. Now for the first time, I understand in what a wretched plight he has put the French expounders, and poets, and critics; and they have always been afraid of him as children of the rod. Shakespeare, much as he has sinned against him, would fare far better with him than the whole French Tragedy.

I am, however, very glad that I have not read him earlier; I should have missed a great pleasure and all the advantages which he now affords me. One must understand very clearly the fundamental ideas, if one would read him with profit: if one does not know well beforehand the subject of which he treats, it must be dangerous to take counsel of him.

It is certain, however, that he can never be entirely understood or appreciated. His whole view of tragedy rests on empiric grounds. He has a quantity of represented tragedies before his eyes, which we no longer have before ours; he reasons from his experience, and to us is wanting nearly the whole basis of his judgment. Nowhere scarcely does he start from the idea of art, always only

from the fact of art, and of the poet, and the representation; and if his judgments are in essentials genuine laws of art, we owe this to the happy accident that there were at that period works of art, which realized an idea through the fact of their existence, and made manifest their genus in an individual case.

If in him one looks for a philosophy of poetry, such as we now have a right to require of a modern æsthetic writer, one will not merely be deceived, but will moreover have to laugh at his rhapsodical manner, and at the extraordinary mixing up together of general and most minute rules of logical, prosodiacal, rhetorical, and poetical propositions; as, for example, when he goes back even to the vowels and consonants. But if one reflects that he had before him an individual tragedy, and that he scrutinized every point that presented itself in it, then everything is easily explained, and one is very glad to recapitulate on such an occasion, all the elements of which a poetic work is composed.

I am not at all surprised that he gives to tragedy the preference over the epic poem: he does not mean to detract from the essential and poetic worth of the *Epopée*, although he does not express himself altogether without ambiguity. As judge and æsthetic critic, he must be better satisfied with that species which is embodied in a permanent form, and in regard to which a judgment can be agreed on. Now this is evidently the case in tragedy, as he had it before him in models, while the more simple and definite business of the dramatic poet can be far more easily understood and declared, and presents to the understanding a more complete technical system, on account of the shorter study and the lesser breadth. In addition to

this, it is plain that his preference for tragedy proceeds from a clearer insight into it; that strictly speaking he is acquainted only with the generic-poetic laws of the *Epopée*, which it has in common with tragedy, and not with the specific ones, through which it is opposed to tragedy; thence also he felt authorized to say, that the *Epopée* is contained in tragedy, and that he who knows how to judge of the latter, can also decide on the former; for the universal pragmatic-poetical of the *Epopée* is indeed contained in tragedy.

There are many apparent contradictions in this treatise, which, however, impart to it a higher value in my eyes; for they give me assurance that the whole consists only of isolated views, and that no theoretic preconceived ideas are involved in it: much, no doubt, may also be ascribed to the translator.

I shall be glad when you are here, to talk over this work with you more in detail.

That in tragedy he lays the chief weight on the concatenation of the incidents, is striking the nail right on the head.

The manner in which he compares poetry and history together, and accords to the former a greater truth than to the latter, pleased me exceedingly from a man in whom the understanding is so predominant.

It is also very clever where he remarks, on occasion of what he says of opinions, that the old poets made their personages speak more politically, the later ones more rhetorically.

What he says in favor of real historic names for dramatic characters, is likewise very judicious.

That he was so very partial to Euripides, as he has

been charged with, I have by no means found. In general I find, after now reading myself his *Poetics*, how monstrously he has been misunderstood.

I send you herewith a letter from Voss, which has just arrived enclosed to me. He sends me also an hexametrical translation of Ovid's *Phæton*, for the *Horen*, which in my great distress arrives very opportunely. He himself will not visit Weimar and Jena on his journey.

As regards the map to your Essay on Moses, we will, if you have no objection, appropriate what shall be received for the Lenzian Treatise,—which I am having inserted in the fifth number,—to defraying the cost of the map. I promised Cotta that no one sheet should cost more than ——— louis d'or; else he would not have been well able to continue the *Horen*. In this way, however, it will answer very well. Do you provide only that we be able to have the Moses and also the plate printed soon.

Does the Aristotle belong to you? If not, I will order it at once, for I should not like to part with it so soon.

I send new *Horen*; also Don Juan, with thanks. I think the subject is quite well suited to a ballad.

Farewell. I have already got quite accustomed to the new mode of life, and pass many an hour in wind and rain, in walking in the garden, and find myself well for it.

JENA, 5th March, 1797.

SCH.

CCCv.

I AM very glad that we have hit upon Aristotle just at the right hour. A book is only then found when it is understood. I recollect very well to have read this trans-

lation thirty years ago, but of the meaning of the work I then comprehended nothing at all. I hope soon that we shall discuss it together more fully. This copy is not mine.

Voss has written me a very pleasant letter, and announces to me his labors upon ancient geography, which I am very curious to see.

Both the letter and the envelope promise a couple of Homeric maps, which, however, I haven't received ; perhaps they are with the Ovidian *Metamorphoses*.

Latterly, when I have again made frequent use of his Homeric translation, I could not but admire and honor its great merit. A thought has occurred to me whereby justice might be done him in a liberal way, and at the same time not without vexing his assailants. We will talk of this.

I am quite willing that we apply the profits of Lenz's *Mummy* to the Map of Palestine. But I wish to pause for a moment yet, until I see whether my Moses will really be ready. Until now I had got the idea of Italy almost entirely out of my mind ; now, however, that the hope of visiting it once more is revived, I see how necessary it is to take my collection* in hand again, to put in order and to plan.

On the 15th I think I shall be with you again, and to remain some time ; I am to-day still quite out of tune, from a week of distractions. Farewell, and enjoy the free air and the solitude.

WEIMAR, 6th May, 1797.

G.

* He refers probably to the manuscripts of his former travels in Italy.

CCCVIII.

* * * * *

HAVE you read Schlegel's critique on Schlosser? It is to be sure, in its fundamental principles, not untrue, but the evil intent and party spirit are much too apparent in it. This Mr. Frederick Schlegel is really getting too bad. He lately told Humboldt that he had reviewed Agnes in the journal *Germany*, and very severely too. But that now, since he hears it is not by you, he regrets that he handled it so roughly. So the coxcomb thinks it his duty to take care that your taste fall not off. And this imprudence is coupled with such ignorance and shallowness, that he really took Agnes to be your work.

The gossip about the *Xenia* continues; I am constantly meeting with a new title of a book, wherein an essay or something similar is announced against the *Xenia*. Lately I found in a journal, called "Annals of Suffering Humanity," an article against them.

I beg you not to forget the conclusion of Cellini, and perhaps, in rummaging among your papers, something else will fall into your hands for the *Horen*, or for the *Almanac*.

Farewell. My wife sends her best regards.

JENA, 16th May, 1797.

SCH.

CCCIX.

I AM sorry that you have to endure the evil of building.* It is a great annoyance, and withal an attractive pastime to have mechanics at work in one's neighborhood. I hope that this event may not disturb you too much.

* Schiller, in the omitted part of the last letter, had told him of repairs he was having made in his house.

I am trying to put things in order as much as possible, that I may earn a few perfectly free weeks, and if possible get a mood for the conclusion of my poem. Of the rest of the dear German literature, I have taken leave once for all. In almost every case opinions of a work are determined by the good or evil disposition towards the person of the author, and the nonsense of party spirit is more distasteful to me than any other caricature.

Since the hope of again seeing the promised, though at present so mal-treated land, has revived in me, I am friends with all the world, and more than ever convinced, that in the theoretical and practical, and particularly in our case, in the scientific and poetical, one should seek to get more and more in harmony with oneself, and so to remain. For the rest, let all things go as they can.

Let us, so long as we remain together, bring our two beings more and more into unison, so that even a longer separation be not able to injure our relation to one another.

The conclusion of Cellini I will take in hand the first thing in Jena; perhaps something else also may turn up, and perhaps Moses will be quickened again through our conversation. Fare you right well; greet your dear wife, and enjoy the fresh air, which, sooner or later, will attune your mind.

WEIMAR, 17th May, 1797.

G.

CCCXI.*

THIS is a fine day for gathering up one's faculties, and it invites to work. Moses, as you have taken him, is really not so unlike Cellini, but the parallel will be thought abominable.

Here is the account. I would rather give you the money myself, the sum is too large. Farewell.

SCH.

CCCXVII.

UNTO the Lord, in desert blight,
Satan a pebble brought,
And said : O Lord, now through thy might,
To bread let it be wrought.

Of many stones, here gives thy friend
To thee a sample piece ;
For which ideas back thou'lt send
With thousand fold increase.

JENA, 13th June, 1797.

G.

CCCXVIII.

I SEND the small remnant of Cellini and the Flower-Girl, and beg in return the lady *Des Belles Cousines*, for which, I don't know why, I have a particular fancy. At the same time, also, the Almanac, which contains the *Dignity of Women*,† for an object that it would be hard for you to guess.

* Goethe was now for some weeks in Jena. The correspondence, during this period, consists of short notes, nearly all from Goethe, relating mostly to the interchange of MS. poems, articles for the Journal, &c. I give only two or three of them.

† A poem of Schiller's.

The barometer continues low, and obliges us to seek our enjoyment within doors, and within ourselves. I shall come this afternoon, only for a short time, because I cannot this evening, I am sorry to say, take the bright supper with you.

JENA, 13th June, 1797.

G.

CCCXXI.

JENA, 18th June, 1797.

SINCE your absence, I have already a foretaste of the great loneliness into which your complete departure will transplant me. Fortunately, the weather favors me just now, and I can live in the free air. In the meantime, I have been at work at Vieilleville, for time passes ; I have, notwithstanding, poetised a little : a small afterpiece to the *Diver*, to which I have been incited by an anecdote in *S. Foix, Essai sur Paris*.

I now look forward with hearty gladness to a poetic activity, and hope in the two next months to bring something to pass.

The determining whether you shall go further than Switzerland, is important to me also, and I await it with impatience. The greater the number of the connexions that I no longer keep up, the greater the influence upon me of the few that are left, and your living presence has the most decided. The last four weeks have again helped to build up, and to found much in me. You draw me off more and more from the tendency (which in everything practical, and especially in the poetical, is a perverseness) to go from the general to the individual, and you lead me, on the contrary, from single cases to great laws. The point is always small and narrow from which you are

accustomed to set out, but it leads me into broad regions, and thereby does my inmost nature good ; whereas, in the path, which, when left to myself, I so readily follow, I always come from the broad into the narrow, and have the unpleasant feeling, to find myself at the end poorer than at the beginning.

Of Humboldt, I have still no news ; he appears to be not yet arrived in Dresden, because Körner could give me no information about him.

This evening, my wife went with Wolzogen, who was here, to Weimar, for a few days. Vieilleville keeps me tied down.

Don't forget to send me the chorus of Prometheus.

Farewell. I long to hear soon from you again.

SCH.

CCCXXI.(a)

ON a rainy day like this it must look lonely in your castle ; however, a wide prospect whose land and sky present such variety of aspects, has more value than is believed by those who enjoy it every day.

I wish you in this confinement from without good progress in your labors.

The *Glove* is a very happy subject, and the execution successful ; we will, in future, at once avail ourselves of subjects of this kind that occur to us. Here we have the perfectly bare fact, without design, or rather with an opposite design, which pleases so particularly.

Within these few days I have taken hold of several things, but have done nothing. I have improved and filled out the plan for the history of Peter's Church, and this work, as well as Moses, and others, will, by degrees, grow

ripe. The present time—which, in the uncertainty wherein I float, cannot nourish a sustained interest—I must make use of as well as I can, until I am again led back to some unity.

I cannot find the chorus out of Prometheus, nor can I recollect that I had it back from Humboldt, wherefore I thought it was in your hands. At all events, Madame Humboldt took a copy of it, and it will be easy therefore to get it from Dresden.

The day before yesterday I paid a visit to Wieland, who lives in a very neat, roomy and comfortably arranged house, in the dreariest region in the world; the road to it is moreover generally very bad. It is fortunate that each man has only to provide that his own condition be comfortable; I wish that the good old man's may never cease to be so to him. The worst really is, according to my idea, that in rainy weather and short days all communication with other people is out of the question.

My situation, which rocks to and fro, between near and far, between a great and a small expedition, has in it at this moment little that is agreeable, and I shall be obliged to continue thus for some weeks yet. If I bring our good friend Meyer back again by Michaelmas, our winter life will then take a good course. In the last four weeks we have, both theoretically and practically, again made excellent progress; and if my nature has the effect of drawing yours into the finite, I, on the other hand, have the advantage that I am often through you drawn beyond my limits, at least that I don't circle round so long on so narrow a spot. If now the old master* joins us, who gives me the benefit of the wealth of a foreign Art, there will surely be no want

* Meyer.

of good influences. I send back the *Glove*, which makes truly a pretty afterpiece and counterpart to the *Diver*, and through its own merit enhances the merit of that poem. Farewell, and let me hear from you soon.

WEIMAR, 21st June, 1797.

G.

CCCXXII.

As it is highly necessary that I give myself something to do, in my present unsettled state, I have determined to go at my *Faust*, in order, if not to finish it, yet at least to carry it forward a good way, and for this I will break up what is printed and arrange it in large masses in connection with what is already finished or invented, and thus more fully prepare for the execution of the plan, which strictly is as yet only an idea. Now I have just taken up again this idea and its exposition, and am tolerably at one with myself in regard to it. Now I would wish that you would have the goodness to revolve the matter in your mind some sleepless night, lay before me the requisitions that you would make on the whole, and thus relate and interpret to me, like a true prophet, my own dreams.

As the different parts of this poem, in what relates to their mood, can be treated differently, provided only that they be kept subordinate to the spirit and tone of the whole; as, moreover, the entire work is subjective, I can therefore work at it in odd moments, and thus I am able to accomplish something now.

Our ballad studies have brought me again into this misty and cloudy road, and circumstances counsel me, in more than one sense, to rove about in it for a while.

What is interesting in my new epic plan, will perhaps vanish into the air in such a mist of rhyme and strophe.

For to-day fare you well. Carl enjoyed himself yesterday in my garden, notwithstanding the bad weather. Had your dear wife remained here it would have given me pleasure to see her and her friends at my house this evening. If you could but make up your mind to measure once more the Jena road. I would, however, wish you better weather for such an expedition.

WEIMAR, 22d June, 1797.

G.

CCCXXIII.

JENA, 23d June, 1797.

YOUR determination to go at Faust has indeed surprised me, particularly now, when you are girding yourself for a journey to Italy. But I have once for all given up measuring you with common logic, and am thence convinced beforehand that your genius will see you well through with the undertaking.

Your request to me to communicate to you my expectations and *desideria*, is not so easy to fulfil; but so far as I can, I will try to discover your thread, and if that is not possible, I will figure to myself that I had accidentally found the fragments of Faust, and had to complete them. Thus much only will I here remark, that your Faust cannot, with all his poetic individuality, entirely ward off the demand for a symbolic significance, as is probably your own idea. The duality of human nature, and the abortive endeavor to unite in man the godlike and the physical, one does not lose sight of; and because the fable runs and must run into the fantastic and formless, people will not stop with the subject, but will be led from it to ideas. In short, the demands on Faust are at the same time philosophical and poetical, and you may turn yourself as you

will, the nature of the subject will impose on you a philosophical treatment, and the imagination must accommodate itself to the service of a philosophical idea.

But herewith I am not telling you anything new, for in what is already done you have begun to satisfy this demand in a high degree.

If you now really take up Faust, I shall have no further doubt of its complete execution, at which I am much rejoiced.

My wife, who brings me your letter, and has just returned from her short journey with Mr. Carl, prevents me from writing more to-day. On Monday, I think I shall send you a new ballad; the present is a fruitful time for the bringing forth of ideas.

Farewell.

SCH.

CCCXXIV.

THANKS for your first words on the reanimated Faust. We shall not differ in our view of this production, but it at once puts one in a quite other mood for work, when one sees his thoughts and purposes indicated from without, and your sympathy is fruitful in more than one sense.

That I have attacked this work at present is in fact a matter of foresight; for as with Meyer's state of health, I must still look to passing the winter here in the north, I don't wish to become burdensome to myself and my friends through chagrin at a disappointed hope, and therefore with joy and love I prepare for myself beforehand a retreat into this symbolical, ideal, and cloudy world.

I will first endeavor to finish the large masses that are already invented and half-wrought, and combine them with

what is printed, and keep at it until the circle exhausts itself.

Farewell ; go on giving me your thoughts about the subject and the treatment, and don't fail to send me the ballad.

WEIMAR, 24th June, 1797.

G.

CCCXXV.

JENA, 27th June, 1797.

HEREWITH are two poems, which were sent in yesterday for the Almanac. Do examine them and tell me in a few words what impression they make on you and what you expect of their author. Of products in this style, I cannot judge well, and precisely in the present instance, I would wish to see very clearly ; because my counsel and hints will have influence with the author.

Fare you right well. The weather is here unfriendly, and it rains, neither has to-day brought forth much.

SCH.

CCCXXVI.

THE "Ring of Polycrates"* is very well executed. The royal friend, before whose eyes, as before those of the listener, everything happens, and the conclusion which leaves the development in suspense, is all very good. I wish that my counterpart piece may turn out as well. Your remarks on Faust gave me much pleasure ; they agree very well, as was natural, with my purposes and plans, only that I take it easier with this barbaric composition, and design rather to be calm than to satisfy the high-

* A poem of Schiller's.

est demands. Thus the understanding and the reason, like two boxers, strike away very ferociously at each other, to lie down amicably together in the evening. I will take care that the parts be graceful and interesting, and give occasion to thought ; with the whole, which will always remain a fragment, the new theory of the epic poem may stand me in stead.

The barometer is in constant motion ; at this season we cannot count on steady weather. One does not feel this inconvenience until one makes demands on a pure existence in the free air ; the Autumn is always our best time.

Fare you right well, and go on making diligent provision for your Almanac. As through my Faust, I continue in the world of rhyme, I shall also, I am sure, furnish something more. It seems to me to be now settled that this is the form best suited to my tigers and lions ; I am only almost afraid that what is really interesting in the subject may at last resolve itself into a ballad. We must wait to see on what shore the Genius will drive the little vessel.

The Ring I will send on Wednesday by the carrier-woman.

WEIMAR, 27th June, 1797.

G.

CCCXXVII.

JENA, 26th June, 1797.

* * * * *

I HAVE now again read Faust, and my head grows dizzy in thinking on the solution. This is, however, quite natural, for the matter depends on a particular point of view, and so long as one has not that, even a subject less rich than this would embarrass the understanding. What

concerns me is, that, from his character, Faust seems to require a totality of material, if in the end the idea is to appear completely carried out, and for a mass that boils up to such a height I know of no poetic rope that will hold it together. Well, you will know how to get out of the difficulty.

For example, it would be necessary, according to my view, that Faust be conducted into practical life, and whatever part you select for him out of this mass, it seems to me that, from its nature, it will require a too great circumstantiality and breadth.

In regard to the treatment, I think the great difficulty is easy to get through with between sport and earnest. Understanding and Reason seem to me in this subject to wrestle together for life. In the present fragmentary form of Faust, this is strongly felt, but expectation is referred to the developed whole. The Devil, through his materialism, pleads for the understanding, and Faust for the heart. Occasionally, however, they seem to change parts, and the Devil takes Reason under his protection against Faust.

One difficulty I find therein, that the Devil through his character, which is material, annuls his existence, which is ideal. As he stands there, it is only Reason that can comprehend him and give him value.

I am very curious to see how the popular fable will fasten itself to the philosophical part of the whole.

Here I send you my Ballad. It is a counterpart to your *Cranes*. Write me, I pray, how the barometer stands; I should like to know, if we may at last hope for steady weather. Farewell.

SCH.

CCCXXVIII.

THE two poems you sent me, which are here returned, I like well enough, and they are sure of finding friends among the public. The African Desert and the North Pole are, however, painted neither through actual nor imaginative contemplation, but rather are both depicted through negations, and so they do not sufficiently contrast, as the intention is, with the sweet cheerful German picture. The other poem, too, has more a natural-historical look than a poetical, and reminds one of the pictures where the animals all gather round Adam in Paradise. Both poems express a gentle aspiration, which resolves itself into contentment. The poet has a cheerful view of nature, with which, however, he seems to be acquainted only at second-hand. Some animated pictures take one by surprise, although I don't like to see the gushing forest as contrasting image to the desert. In particular expressions, as in the measure, there is here and there something to be altered.

Without having seen more things by the author, so that one could judge whether he had other means and talent in other measures, I should not know what to counsel him. I should say that there are in both poems good ingredients for a poet, which, however, alone do not make a poet. Perhaps it were best that he should choose a perfectly simple idyllic fact and depict it: thus one could sooner see how he would succeed with painting men, whereupon after all everything in the end depends. I should think that the *Ether* would not appear ill in the Almanac, and the *Wanderer* suit very well in the *Horen*.

The *Ring*, which I here send back again, stands repeated reading perfectly well; it grows, indeed, better, as

every poem of merit must, inasmuch as it compels us into the mood, which we do not at once bring with us to the first hearing or reading.

Fare you well in this rainy weather, which is unfriendly as well to the hay-harvest as to those who live in gardens.

WEIMAR, 28th June, 1797.

G.

CCCXXIX.

JENA, 30th June, 1797.

I AM glad that you do not altogether dislike my friend and protégé. What was faulty in his work struck me very forcibly, but I wasn't quite sure whether, too, the good that I thought I perceived in it would stand the test. To be frank, I found in these poems much of my own early manner, and it is not the first time that the author has reminded me of myself. He has a sharp subjectivity, and combines therewith a certain philosophical spirit and penetration. His condition is dangerous, as it is so very difficult to get at such natures. Meanwhile, however, I find in these new pieces the beginning of a certain improvement, when I compare them with his former works; for, in short, it is Hölderlin whom you saw at my house some years ago. I would not give him up, if I could see any possibility of drawing him out of his own company, and of opening to him a beneficial and enduring influence from without. He is living now as tutor in the house of a merchant in Frankfurt, and is therefore, in matters of taste and poetry, bounded within himself, and in this situation is ever more and more driven into himself.

For the *Horen*, our poetess Mereau has made me a very agreeable present, and which has really surprised me. It

is the beginning of a Novel, in Letters, which are written with far more clearness, lightness, and simplicity, than I could ever have expected from her. In them she begins to free herself from faults, which I looked upon as quite incurable in her, and if she continues to go in this good road, we shall yet live to see something made of her. I cannot, indeed, but be astonished how our women now are able, in a mere dilettante way, to acquire a certain dexterity in writing, which comes near to Art.

Do you happen to know one *Ahlwardt*, rector in Ank-lam, through a translation of Callimachus? He has offered himself to the *Horen*, and refers to Voss, who sent him to me. He translates out of ancient and modern languages, and he says that in the *Mercury* of 1795 there are several things by him from Euripides, Ovid, and also from Camo-ens. If you see Boettiger, have the goodness to ask him about that matter, and to obtain through him those numbers of the *Mercury*. He offers me *Hero* and *Leander*, and some translations from the English, and I should like very well to make use of him.

I could wish that the two tolerably pleasant days which we have again enjoyed may have been more fruitful to you than to me. My cramps have been sharper again for some days, and have not let me sleep. I wanted to think about *Faust* again, but the Devil in my body kept down the poetic one.

Fare you right well.

SCH.

I have some reminiscences out of a journey through North America by Thomas Carver, and I have a thought that the character of these tribes might perhaps be well given in a song. For that, however, I should have to look

into Carver again. I had the book of Knebel, who is, however, as I hear, absent. Perhaps Voigt has it, who is so richly provided with books of travels, and would lend it to me on one of the carrier-days.

CCCXXX.

I WILL also acknowledge that those poems reminded me somewhat of your style and manner ; a similarity of direction is certainly not to be mistaken ; but they have neither the fullness, nor the vigor, nor the depth of your works. Meanwhile these poems commend themselves by a certain delicacy, cordiality, and sobriety, and the author deserves,—particularly as you already have had relations with him,—that you should do what is possible to lead and to guide him.

Our women are to be praised, if they continue thus to develope and form themselves by study and practice. After all, modern artists have no other way. There is no theory,—at least no generally intelligible one,—there are no decided models, which represent whole classes, and thus, therefore, must each one, by participation and approximation and much practice, cultivate his poor self.

Counsellor Hirt is here ; he is to me, in many ways, a strange phenomenon. The monuments of ancient and modern art in the glorious land are very vividly present to him ; and as a man of understanding he knows right well how to classify and value a full empirical knowledge, as, for example, in Architecture, which is properly his department, he has a right good judgment. The well-known idea of the symbolical transferring, as it were, of the completed wooden construction to construction with stone, he knows how to carry out very well, and to exhibit

the conformity of the parts to use as well as to beauty. In the other Arts he has also an extensive experience, but in strict æsthetic judgment he has not advanced from the point where we left him; and in respect to antiquarian information, he cannot stand by the side of Boettiger, because he has neither the breadth nor the subtlety. On the whole his presence is very agreeable to me, because his endeavors are lively and edifying, and earnest, without being burthensome. He has had a great many drawings made for his architectural demonstrations, in which the good and the faulty are very judiciously placed side by side.

I will make inquiries about the new contributor as well as about Carver.

Herewith is a sheet on account of the other books, which I beg you to subscribe, and to send me back the other two.

With a view to the plan and general survey I have rapidly pushed Faust forward right smartly, but palpable architecture soon frightened away the air-phantoms. I only want now a quiet month, and the work would grow out of the earth like a huge family of toad-stools, full of wonders and horrors. Should nothing come out of my journey, I have put my sole trust in these drolleries. I am now having what is printed copied again, and separated at the same time into its parts, for thus the new can the better grow up together with the old.

From Meyer I hav'n't heard for some time. Of my Poem seven sheets are arrived, which contain five Cantos and the half of the sixth. Fare you well, and think of me.

WEIMAR, July 1st, 1797.

G.

CCXXXI.

July 4th, 1797.

HIRT has occupied me in the last three days in a very interesting manner, and left behind him with me what will give me something to think of for a long while. His judgments, although they are somewhat comprehensive, rest on a manifold and long contemplation, and express in a few words fruitful results of an active observation and thorough study. To me it seems that in the main he agrees tolerably well with you and Meyer; at least, one can talk with him long of what is deepest and most inward, without striking on a dissonance, or being unintelligible to each other. I should like to have been the third man when you conversed with him on these subjects, because I cannot long maintain a conversation about plastic Art out of my own materials, but can listen with profit.

He is very much prepossessed against Michael Angelo, and it seems to me that he places him far too low, when he allows him only a temporary value. At the same time, however, I found his arguments in favor of this hard sentence against Michael Angelo very intelligent, and doubt merely as to the just statement of facts whereon he grounds them.

For the rest I don't quite know yet what I ought to think of Hirt, and whether he will stand the test of a longer acquaintance. Perhaps much does not belong to him wherewith he now makes a show; at least, it seems to me, that the warmth and vivacity with which he could set forth many things, do not properly lie in his nature.

Make him tell you something about Painter Mueller, if he has not already done it. It is quite diverting how the article in the *Horen* against Fernow originated.

I hope to-morrow to hear from you that Faust has advanced. Hirt's being here has drawn me off from work for the last few days; only the idea of the North American Song has been executed. I send the Song, which, for the sake of change, may pass.

Herewith is the note of the books, together with a letter from Humboldt. You will receive the books through my brother-in-law, to whom I send a package to-day.

Fare you well.

SCH.

CCCXXXII.

FAUST has for the time been laid aside; the northern phantoms have been for a while thrust back by the southern reminiscences; nevertheless, I have worked out the whole very circumstantially in reference to the plan and general survey.

I am very glad that you have become personally acquainted with our old Roman friend; you will in future better understand him and his works. One sees in him also what good a rich and almost complete empirical knowledge brings forth in an intelligent man. Therein you judge him quite correctly, that his logical operations go on perfectly well, if the premises are right; but he often begins by laying down premises as general, which, if not false, are yet limited and one-sided, so that the conclusions can only stand a short time. Thus his dislike of Michael Angelo springs from a fixed, untenable idea; thus in the Essay on Laocoon, which I send herewith, he is in many respects right, and nevertheless he falls short in the whole, as he does not perceive that Lessing's, Winkelman's and his, yea, and other expositions, all

together do no more than define the boundaries of art. At the same time, it is very good how he insists upon the characteristic and pathetic in the plastic arts also.

I have on this occasion recalled to mind an essay which I wrote many years ago, and as I have not been able to find it, I have put together the matter, which I still well remember, according to my, and I may say our, present convictions. Perhaps I can send it over on Saturday. The Essay of Hirt is a good preparation for it, as it has been the latest prompter of it. Perhaps this will give occasion to much else, particularly if Meyer comes back with his treasures, as I shall likewise take the opportunity to go at the Church of St. Peter's again, because this treatise can also be looked upon as the basis of so many other things.

The *Song of the Dead*, which herewith goes back to you, has its genuine character of reality and humor, which in such cases so well becomes savage natures. It is a great merit of poetry, that it transports us into these moods, as it is likewise meritorious to be ever widening the circle of poetic subjects. Fare you right well, greet your dear wife, and use and enjoy the time as much and as well as is possible.

From Meyer I have as yet heard nothing.

WEIMAR, 5th July, 1797.

G.

Could you send me a copy of Wallenstein's Camp? I have promised it to the Duchess, who has already several times inquired with interest about your work.

CCCXXXIII.

I DELAY not to send you immediately the note I have just received from Meyer. It was my earnest, and I may truly say, at this moment my only wish, to learn that he was again in Switzerland, where he before recovered so beautifully, and will also this time I am sure recover again.

I am now preparing for my departure, so that I may get off as soon as the Duke arrives. It were for a hundred considerations admirable and well if you could come over here for some days; I should indeed at all events visit you once more, but that could only be for a few hours, and we should then still have much left to talk of. To-morrow early more. Farewell.

WEIMAR, 7th July, 1797.

G.

CCCXXXIV.

JENA, 7th July, 1797.

Now were, it seems to me, just the right moment to review and throw light upon the Greek works of Art from the side of the characteristic: for the views of Winkelman and Lessing continue to prevail universally, and our latest æsthetic writers, as well on poetry as the plastic arts, do their utmost to free the Beautiful of the Greeks from all that is characteristic, and to make it the standard of the modern Beautiful. To me it seems, that the later analysts, in their endeavors to isolate the idea of the Beautiful and establish it in a certain purity, have almost hollowed it out and converted it into an empty sound; that they have gone much too far in contradistinguishing the Beautiful from the right and fitting, and that they have grossly exaggerated a separation which only

the philosopher makes, and which is only admissible from one point of view.

Many again fail, I find, in another way, inasmuch as they refer the idea of the Beautiful far too much to the subject of a work of art instead of to the treatment, and so they cannot but be embarrassed when they have to comprehend under one single idea of beauty, the Apollo of the Vatican, and other similar works,—which from their subject alone are beautiful forms,—with the Laokoon, with a Faun, and other painful and ignoble representations.

It is, as you know, the same case with poetry. How have people ever worried themselves, and still worry themselves, to reconcile the coarse, often low and hateful natures in Homer and the tragic poets, with the notions they had formed for themselves of the Grecian Beautiful! Would that some one were once bold enough to attempt to throw out of circulation the idea and even the word Beauty, to which all those false notions are inseparably tied, and in its stead to place, as it should be, Truth in its most comprehensive sense!

I should like to have the Treatise of Hirt in the *Horen*. You and Meyer, if the path is once open, would then be able to take up the thread the more conveniently, and you would likewise find the public the better prepared. I, too, should find my account in it if this matter touching the characteristic and passionate in Greek works of art came to be thoroughly discussed, for I foresee that the investigations into Greek tragedy, which I have laid off for myself, will lead me to the same point. Your Essay I await with eagerness.

I have come to the conclusion that the musical part of the Almanac must be finished first of all, because other-

wise the composer will not be ready. Therefore I have now gone to work at my bell-founder's song, and since yesterday I have been studying in Kruenitz's Encyclopædia, out of which I get a great deal of profit. This poem I have much at heart, but it will cost me several weeks, because I need for it so many varieties of moods, and there is a great bulk to be worked up. I should have no objection, if you advise me to it, to let four or five short Nadowessian songs follow after, in order to carry through a variety of conditions this creation into which I have now thrown myself.

My projected journey to Weimar would not be brought to pass this week; I however hope to effect it next week. The Prologue is just now abroad; so soon as it returns, I will send it or bring it myself with me.

Fare you well. My wife sends best greetings to you.

SCH.

CCCXXXV.

THE treatise of Hirt has the great merit that it inculcates the characteristic with so much spirit, and its appearance must force a discussion of the subject. I will try to get it for the *Horen*. Here is also mine, which I commend to your indulgence as being as a whole, as well as in the parts, a hasty Essay. I desire to hear how you are satisfied with the method and the spirit, as I am anxious to hear Meyer's opinion of the exposition proper of the work of Art. One might extend this treatise over the finest statues of antiquity and other works of art, and with you I am convinced that one would coöperate very acceptably with whoever is engaged in the field of Tragedy.

As our friend Meyer is once more safe and whole on northern ground, I foresee much good. I say no more to-day. Fare you well, and bring the Bell to a happy end; as also I advise some Nadowessian songs. If it is possible, do come next week; it would really, too, be pretty if you could come into closer relations with Hirt, and could hear from himself his architectural deductions.

WEIMAR, 8th July, 1797.

S.

CCCXXXVI.

JENA, 10th July, 1797.

You have with few words, and in an artless dress, uttered glorious things in this treatise, and spread a truly admirable clearness over the beautiful subject. In fact, the treatise is a model of how one ought to look at and judge of works of art; but it is also a model how one ought to apply principles. In regard to both, I have learnt very much out of it.

More thereupon orally, for I intend to bring it with me to-morrow, when, if nothing intervenes, I shall be with you after three o'clock. In case I cannot well lodge with you, I beg you to let me know at the gate, through a note, so that I may then drive to my brother-in-law's. My wife comes with me, and we purpose staying till Thursday.

Meyer's happy arrival in his native city, and the rapid improvement of his health, has given me hearty pleasure. Also the certainty, at least for this autumn and winter, not to be so very far separated from you, is to me very comforting.

Farewell. Humboldt prays you to send to Dresden as soon as possible his *Æschylus*, which he has need of.

SCH.

CCCXXXVII.

AT parting, you could have given me nothing more grateful and wholesome than your visit of the last eight days. I believe I don't deceive myself when I look upon our being together this time as again very fruitful; so much has been developed for the present, and prepared for the future, that I set off with more contentment, as on the way I hope to be right busy, and again look forward to your coöperation on my return. If we continue thus to execute simultaneously different works, and while we gently urge forward the larger, cheer and divert ourselves with smaller ones, much may be yet brought about.

Here is the Polycrates back; I hope that the *Cranes* will soon follow after me. By Saturday, you will hear more definitively about my departure. Fare you well, and greet your dear wife. To Schlegel, I wrote to-day.

WEIMAR, 19th July, 1797.

G.

CCCXXXVIII.

JENA, 21st July, 1797.

I CAN never part from you without something having been planted in me; and it gives me joy, if, for the much that you give me, I can set you and your inward wealth in motion. A relation thus built on reciprocal perfectibility must ever keep fresh and active, and gain the more in variety, the more harmonious it becomes, and the more diversity disappears, which, with so many others, is all that hinders uniformity. I may hope that by degrees we shall understand each other in everything, of which account can be given, and in that which from its nature cannot be understood, we shall remain near to one another through feeling.

The most beautiful and most fruitful way that I profit by our mutual communications, and appropriate them to myself, is always this, that I apply them immediately to the work I have in hand, and use them at once productively; and, as you say in the introduction to *Laocoon*, that the whole of Art lies in one single work, so I believe that one must transfuse all that is general in Art into the most particular case, if the reality of the idea is to be preserved. And thus, I hope, shall my *Wallenstein*, and whatever of importance I may in future produce, contain and show in the concrete the whole system of that which in our intercourse has been able to pass into my being.

The longing after this work stirs again strongly within me, for now it is a more definite object that assigns to the faculties their activity, and each step is here more important, instead of which, with new raw matter I am obliged so often to grasp about me empty-handed. I will now first try to get the songs for the *Almanac* ready, because the composers urge me so strongly, then try my luck at the *Cranes*, and with September return to the Tragedy.

The accounts from you will bring a fruitful change into the simple existence to which I am now limited, and in addition to the new that you will convey to me, will reanimate in me the old that has been treated of between us.

And so farewell, and think of me when you are with our friend, as you will ever be present to us. My wife says to you a hearty farewell.

SCH.

CCCXXXIX.

To Professor Meyer, at Staefa.

JENA, 21st July, 1797.

HEARTILY we give you welcome on German ground, dear friend. Anxiety about you has often disturbed us, and cordially we rejoice at your returning health.

I am ashamed that the first line from me reaches you while you are again on the return to us, but as much as I should have had to say to you orally, yet nothing presented itself that I should have cared to send over the mountains. What we were busied with and how it fared with us, that you learnt from our friend, and he will also have told you how much you were present to us. From him I have heard with hearty interest of what concerns you, how excellently you employed your time, and what treasures you were collecting for us all.

Nor have we in the meantime been inactive, as you know, and least of all our friend, who in the last few years has really surpassed himself. His epic poem you have read; you will admit that it is the pinnacle of his and all our modern art. I have seen it grow up, and have wondered almost as much at the manner of its growth as at the completed work. Whilst the rest of us are obliged painfully to collect and to prune, in order slowly to bring forth anything passable, he has only gently to shake the tree, in order to have fall to him the most beautiful fruit, ripe and heavy. It is incredible with what ease he now reaps upon himself the fruits of a well-bestowed life and a persistent culture; how significant and sure now all his steps are; how the clearness as to himself and as to objects, preserves him from every idle effort and beating about. But you have him now yourself, and can satisfy

yourself of all this with your own eyes. But you will agree with me in this, that on the summit where he now stands, he ought to think more of bringing the beautiful form he has given himself to outward exhibition, than to go out in search of new material; in short, that he now ought to live entirely for poetic execution. When once one among thousands who strive thereafter, has brought it to that, out of himself to make a beautiful complete whole, he can, in my opinion, do nothing better than to seek for this whole every possible mode of expression; for however further he may get to, he can still do nothing higher. I acknowledge, therefore, that all that by a longer residence in Italy he might gain for certain ends, to me would nevertheless seem lost for his highest and most immediate end. Therefore prompt him on this account also, dear friend, to come back very soon, and not to seek too far for that which he has at home.

I have the agreeable hope of having you both probably again near me this Winter, and thus to continue the old delightful life of inter-communication. My health is not much better, but also no worse, and that is a good sign; the courage and will are left, and the transition from speculation to production has refreshed me and made me young.

I have also in the interim become acquainted with your pupil, and have had much pleasure in her talent and agreeable nature. She thinks of you with lively interest; and I hope the poetic talent, which has since developed itself so finely in her, will not have injured the other.

Farewell, my valued friend; I look forward with eagerness to the more direct accounts that G. will give me of you. My wife greets you heartily; my family has, in the

meanwhile, increased, as you perhaps know, and you will find Carl a fine well-disposed boy.

SCH.

CCCXL.

TO-DAY I say nothing but my best thanks for your two-fold farewell greeting, and for the *Horen* you sent.

The longer I remain here the more trifles there are to do, and time passes without my either taking in or bringing forth anything, and I must take care that I don't grow impatient.

Schlegel has just left me; it seemed merely that his wish to form once more closer relations with you has this time again brought him hither.

Could you have re-copied for me your *Diver*, *Polycrates*, and *Glove*? I sent my copies to Meyer. I may, perhaps, meet on the road a few good Christian or heathen souls to whom one might like to read such things. Before I set out I will at all events write again.

WEIMAR, 22d July, 1797.

G.

CCCXLI.

JENA, 23d July, 1797.

To wait with one's trunk packed is a most wretched condition, from which I wish you a speedy release. It is well that just at this time you see before you lighter occupations and sports, for which an interrupted and half mood at any rate suffice.

Humboldt writes me that his wife has the fever again. That will be a fine journey, for they will now have to stay in Dresden over the time. I tell you this for comfort, as the other Jew did to Shylock: other people have ill luck too.

The three pieces, which Humboldt has just sent back to me, I enclose herewith.

Farewell. I will write again the day after to-morrow, if nothing in the meantime happens.

SCH.

To Boettiger I will send to-day the Klopstockiana, and have also written him a few lines.

The news of your indisposition came upon me very disagreeably this morning early after a sleepless night; I hope this letter will find you already mending, whereto, perhaps, the arrival of the Duke will contribute its part. You will, however, have cause to expect after this firmer health.

I here send you, for your recreation, an entirely new work, which testifies to German industry in a quite new mode. Such a phenomenon of nullity, absurdity, and impudence is really only possible in these latest times of our literature, when the rapid exchange of ideas and forms no longer leaves time to determine *meum* and *tuum*. I have found here printed, amongst other things, whole passages half a page long out of my æsthetic treatises, without mark of quotation, and wondered not a little to hear my *ipsissima verba* resound in my ears out of the kingly mouth.

To make up for this, however, a new poet has announced himself, who at last promises something better. He lives in Friedberg, near Frankfort; his name is Schmidt, and from his whole *habitus*, I conclude that he must live in a right savage loneliness, and perhaps in a low station. From some samples which I enclose, you will see that the man has something in him, and that through a rough, hard diction, genuine deep sensibility and a certain free move-

ment of mind are visible. When this half-savage shall have got his language and the verse well under command, and an outward grace to an inward substance, I hope to make in him an acquisition for future Almanacs. If he pleases you likewise, it were worth considering, whether you could not say something cheering to him in Frankfort, as well as to our Captain Steigentesch.

I break off for to-day, for the pen almost falls out of my hand from weariness. Do let us hear to-morrow how you are ; my wife also sends you hearty wishes for your recovery. Fare you right well.

JENA, 24th July, 1797.

SCH.

CCCXLII.

HEARTY thanks for your concern about my health. The effects of a cold plagued me very badly for four and twenty hours, but now I am again fully re-established, and hope yet to start on my journey at the end of this week. Herewith comes the once more murdered, or rather the putrified, Gustavus the Third ; it is just such a beggar's soup as the German public like. This kind of writings has taken the place of the conversations in the realm of the dead, which always made great impression on our truth-loving nation. The new poet is right brave, and I should like to make his acquaintance. You will perhaps amend here and there a trifle, only for the sake of clearness. His loneliness and narrow circle are, in truth, very perceptible in him.

The Duke arrived yesterday, and looks very well ; the celebrated Marianne Meyer is also here. It is a pity she hadn't come some days earlier, I should have liked you

to become acquainted with this singular being. Fare you well, and greet your dear wife. When my eye fell upon poems in the hand-writing of your copyist, I thought I already saw the cranes flying. I am so out of mood that I must to-day quickly end even my prose.

WEIMAR, 26th July, 1797.

G.

CCCXLIII.

JENA, 28th July, 1797.

IN the uncertainty whether this letter will find you still in Weimar, I write you only a few words at parting; we are all rejoiced to see you so soon recovered, and at last in the enjoyment of your wish. May the journey now have a good sequel, and if interesting acquaintances fail on the way, may it be shortened to you by the Muses. Perhaps out of your travelling ship there will fly a beautiful poetic dove, although cranes do not take their flight from South to North. These continue at rest with me, and I even avoid thinking of them, in order to send forth some other things first. Just now the poems of friends, male and female, the publication of Agnes Lilien, and the equipping of the *Horen*, draw me off very much, and not at all agreeably.

To Schlegel I made some comments on his *Prometheus*, whereupon in the answer, which I enclose, he has explained himself at great length, but not very satisfactorily. I have, meanwhile, done my part, and at any rate the matter could not be mended.

To my new Friedberger poet, Schmidt, and also to Hoelderlin, I have given notice of your coming arrival in Frankfurt; it is now to be seen whether these good people will gather courage to present themselves before you. I hope

they will, and also to you these poetic figures will perhaps not be unwelcome in prosaic Frankfort. You will likewise find there the imperial Captain von Steigentesch. Once more take our blessing on your journey, and fare you right well !

SCH.

CCCXLIV.

TO-MORROW, then, at last, I set off from this in earnest, but precisely four weeks later than I had intended. From the difficulty of getting off, my journey ought by rights to become very important ; I fear, however, that it will be like other human things. From Frankfort you will have soon at least a few words.

Within a few days I have read aloud our Ballad-experiments, and perceived a good impression from them. In your *Glove* the doubt was started whether one could say *an animal licks its tongue* ; I really did not know what to say to it.

I herewith send Schlegel's article back ; it is with poems as with actions, 'tis bad when they have to be justified.

Farewell. You said lately that only poetry can give the mood for poetry, and as this is very true, one sees how much time the poet loses when he mingles in the world, particularly when he has no dearth of matter. I shudder already at the breadth of the matter-of-fact world before me ; nevertheless, let us hope for the best, and when we meet again recruit ourselves once more in manifold recitals and observations. Fare you right well with your dear wife and yours.

WEIMAR, 29th July, 1797.

G.

CCCXLV.

JENA, 7th Aug., 1797.

WE are very desirous to hear, dear friend, how your journey ended. The oppressive heat by day, and the almost incessant storm by night, made us anxious about you, for here it was hardly to be borne, and I have not yet got up from it, so violently did it attack my nerves.

I can therefore say little to you to-day, for I am scarcely beginning to feel myself free from strong stirrings of fever, which I have had for eight days past, and feared really that I should fall into a serious illness.

Zelter sent within a few days the Melodies to your *Bayadère*, and to the song of Mignon. The latter pleases me particularly. The Melody to the Ballad does not indeed suit equally well all the strophes, but in some, as in the third from the last, the chorus, "Youth we carry," does very well. I enclose the Melodies, in case you meet, in Frankfort, with a pair of fine voices that can sing them to you.

Herder has also sent me back our Ballads, which I had transmitted to him; but what impression they made, I cannot ascertain from his letter. From it, on the other hand, I learn that in the *Diver* I have merely re-wrought with improvement a certain Nicholas Pesce, who must have narrated or sung the same story. Do you happen to know this Nicholas Pesce, with whom I am thus so unexpectedly put in competition? For the rest we can hope for absolutely nothing from Herder for this year's Almanac; he complains of his poverty, but declares that he therefore prizes the more others' wealth.

I have lately taken up again *Diderot sur la Peinture*, in order again to invigorate myself in the animating company of this genius. It strikes me that it is with Diderot as

with many others, who hit the truth with their feeling, but often lose it again through their reasoning. To me he looks altogether too much in works of art to foreign and moral ends ; he does not seek these sufficiently in the absolute condition and in its representation. To him the beautiful work of art must always serve for something else. And as the truly beautiful and perfect in art necessarily makes men better, so he seeks for this effect of Art in its argument and in a definite result for the understanding or for the moral sentiment. I believe it to be one of the merits of our latter philosophy, that we have a pure formula to express the subjective operation of the æsthetic, without destroying its character.

Fare you well. Gladden us soon with good tidings. From my wife heartiest greetings, the children are well ; news I cannot give you from my narrow circle.

SCH.

CCCXLVI.

WITHOUT the slightest mischance, I arrived in Frankfort in spirits and health, and now, for the first time, in a quiet, cheerful house, I reflect upon what it is at my time of life to go into the world. At an earlier age, objects appear grander to us and perplex us more, because we cannot judge them nor embrace them. Later we know things better, a larger number of them interests us, and we should be very badly off, if self-possession and method did not come to our help in these cases. I will put in order as well as possible everything that has occurred to me in these eight days, test my plan on Frankfort itself as a city that embraces so much, and then prepare myself for a further journey.

It struck me as very remarkable what the peculiar character of the public in a large city is. It lives in an incessant tumult of getting and spending, and that which we call high mood can neither be produced nor communicated. All pleasures, even the theatre, are intended only to distract,* and the great fondness of the reading public for journals and novels arises precisely thence, that the former always, and the latter mostly, bring distraction to distraction.

I even think I have remarked a kind of shyness towards poetic productions, or, at least, in so far as they are poetic, which, from these causes, appears to me quite natural. Poetry requires, nay, exacts, collectedness ; it isolates man against his will ; it forces itself on the attention repeatedly, and is in the broad world (not to say the great world) as inconvenient as a faithful mistress.

I accustom myself now to write down everything as objects present themselves, and what I think about them, without requiring of myself the most accurate observation and ripest judgment, or thinking of a future use. When one has gone entirely over the whole ground, then one can always with better survey make use of the supply as material.

I have occasionally visited the theatre, and made myself a methodical plan for judging of it. Whilst I now by degrees seek to fill it out, it has for the first time forcibly struck me, that one could strictly write a tolerable book of travels only about foreign countries, where one has no relations with anybody. About the place where one commonly resides, no one would venture to write anything, unless it

* For the expressive German words *zerstreuen*, and *zerstreuung*, I can find here no nearer equivalents than *distract* and *distraction*.

were merely the enumeration of existing objects ; just so it is with whatever is in some measure near to us, one feels that it were a sacrilege if one should publicly utter even his most just and moderate judgment about things : these observations lead to very neat results and show me the way that is to go. Thus, for instance, I am now comparing the theatre here with that in Weimar ; when I shall have besides seen that of Stuttgart, something general may perhaps be said about the three that will be important, and that at any rate may likewise be publicly declared.

Fare you well, and keep yourself in health and in enjoyment in your garden-house. Greet for me your dear wife. If I ever once more reach the Jena palace, no one will quickly drive me out of it. It is well that I have already contributed my part to the Almanac of the Muses, for on the journey I can as little hope to meet with a poem as with the Phoenix.

Once more, the best farewell.

FRANKFORT ON THE MAINE, 4th Aug., 1797.

G.

CCCXLVII.

SCHMIDT from Friedberg has been with me ; it was not a disagreeable, but neither was it a beneficent apparition. Upon the whole a handsome young man, a small head on moderate shoulders, admirable feet and ankles, spruce, cleanly, neatly dressed according to the fashion here, his features small and close together, small black eyes, black hair, cut close to the head, sans-culottishly. But about his brow the father of the gods had forged a brazen band. With his mouth he made extraordinary distortions, as if he wished to give to what he said a certain

additional peculiar expression. He is the son of a thrifty merchant, who designed him for a clergyman ; thereby the man was shoved entirely out of his path. I believe that if he had been brought up to some circumscribed way of life and small trafficking business, he would have done right well, as he seems to have energy and a certain inwardness ; I should like best to see him in a national guard. The sequel will show, but I fear there is not much joy to flow from his life. Considering that he is not a man in straitened circumstances, but one who from his talk, his appearance and dress, lives in moderate comfort, it is a bad sign that no trace of aspiration, liberality, love, trustfulness, showed itself. To me he displayed himself in the shallow egotism of an ex-student. But at the same time no trace of rawness, nothing awry in his deportment, except the distortions of mouth.

I took as the basis of my treatment that *you* sent him to me, and in this spirit I started various things, but, nevertheless, nothing, either general or particular, that I said, resounded upon him, not even about Reinholdt and Fichte, notwithstanding that he has heard them both. I could draw nothing of moment out of him, except that a year since he obtained certain views of the world, through which he feels himself inclined to poetry (which, indeed, might be very well), but that he was also convinced that true culture consists only in a certain conjunction of philosophy and poetry. Against which I have nothing to say, if only I had not to hear it from a young man. For the rest he went away as he came, before a conversation on any one subject had been set afoot, and was to me for this short time significant enough. In his reserved manner he reminded me of Hölderlin, although he is taller and better

made. So soon as I have seen the latter, I will present you with a closer parallel. As in the course of my life, particularly in former times, I have fallen in with many characters of this kind, and have learnt what they are strictly worth, I will further add a general remark. Men out of the mercantile class, who addict themselves to literature, and especially to poetry, have and retain a peculiar tournure. In some is discernible a certain earnestness and heartiness, a certain fixedness of purpose and tenacity, in others a lively, active endeavor; but they seem to me capable of no exaltation, nor of the idea whereon it depends. Perhaps I do this class injustice, and there are many out of other classes with whom it fares no better. Think through your experience, probably some exceptions will be found.

It is mostly the habit to be anxious for those who are in motion, and oftentimes it should be the reverse. Thus, your dear letter of the 7th, says that you have not been well, whilst I suffered little or not at all from the tempest. The thunderstorms cooled the air in the night and morning; we started very early; the hottest hours of the day we halted to feed; and when even some portions of the way were made in the warm time of the day, for the most part there was a breeze on the heights, and in the valleys where brooks run. Suffice it, that I arrived at Frankfort with small inconvenience. Here I might now again accustom myself to the life of a large city, accustom myself not only to travel, but to live while travelling, if this were not totally denied to me by fate; for I feel right well that my nature strives only after collectedness and harmonious moods, and has no enjoyment in anything that hinders these. Had I not in my Hermann and Dorothea

an example, that modern subjects, taken in a certain sense, adapt themselves to the Epic, I would rather have nothing more to do with this empiric expanse. On the stage, as I also again see here, there were at the present moment much to do; but one would have to take it lightly, and handle it in the Gozzian manner; but it is not in any sense worth the trouble.

Meyer received our Ballads very well. I have already had several letters from him here, because from Weimar I wrote him weekly letters to Staefa; his is a pure, truly forward-striding nature, invaluable in every sense. I will but hasten to get possession of him once more in person, and then not let him from me again.

I heartily pity the old man* on the Topfberg, that he is doomed, through God knows what strange temper, to obstruct the path of himself and others on his own ground. There I like a thousand times better the Frankfort bankers, merchants, brokers, traders, Jews, gamblers and jobbers, who at any rate bring somewhat to pass for themselves, although they trip up other people's heels. Nicholas Pesce, as well as I can recollect, is the hero of the tale that you have treated, a diver by trade. But, if our old friend with such an execution of the subject can still call to mind the chronicle which relates the story, how can we blame the rest of the public if with novels they ask—whether, then, all that is really true? Just as remarkable an example is Diderot, who, with so high a genius, with such deep feeling and clear understanding, could not get to see, that culture through Art must go its own way, that it cannot be subordinated to any other culture, that it at-

* Herder.

taches itself so aptly to every other, &c., all which nevertheless were easy to comprehend, because the fact stands out so prominently.

Poor T. cuts a very ridiculous figure, who, after having sung and twittered his whole lifetime, just as kind Nature had shaped his throat and beak, is now striving to stretch out his individuality by means of the rack of the new philosophical exactions, and drags his beggarly jacket on the ground, in order to give assurance that he has in his wardrobe just such a royal mantle. I will immediately despatch the *exposé* to Meyer. And yet these men, who can believe that what is naught in our Art is all, are better off than we others, who are more or less convinced that the all of our Art is naught.

A sceptical materialism beseems a traveller. What is left in me of the ideal, is carried in a well-locked casket, like that Undinian pigmy-woman; you will, therefore, have patience with me in this respect. Probably I shall be able to write down for you every little incident on the journey. I will, however, first wait for a couple of months: for, although in the empirical world almost everything has by itself a disagreeable effect on me, nevertheless the whole does very well, when one at last comes to a clear consciousness of one's self. Fare you well, and interpret for yourself, as you know me, my often strange words: for it were impossible for me to rectify myself, and to bring these rhapsodical fancies into any connection or consistency.

Greet for me your dear wife, and hold in good estimation your Agnes and Amelia. One does not know what one has in such beings, until one looks about for their like in the broad world. You, my friend, have the gift to be

effective as an instructor, which, to me, is totally denied ; these two pupils will, I am sure, yet bring much to pass, if they will only communicate their views, and, in regard to the disposition of the whole, get a deeper insight into the fundamental requirements of Art.

CCCXLVIII.

FRANKFORT, 14th August, 1797.

YESTERDAY I witnessed the representation of the opera *Palmyra*, which, upon the whole, was very well and becomingly given. In particular I had the pleasure of seeing one department quite perfect, namely, the scenery ; it is by a Milanese, Fuentes, who is at present here. With scenic architecture there is the great difficulty, that one must have a knowledge of the principles of genuine architecture, and yet at the same time depart from them to attain the end in view. Architecture, in the higher sense, ought to have an earnest, lofty, steadfast character and expression—it can scarcely give into the graceful without becoming weak—but, on the stage, everything should have a graceful air. Theatrical architecture should be light, ornamental, diversified, and yet at the same time it ought to represent the gorgeous, the elevated, the noble. The scenes, particularly the backgrounds, ought always to make pictures ; the scene painter must go a step further than the landscape painter, who likewise knows how to modify architecture according to his wants. The scenes in *Palmyra* give examples, from which the rules of scene painting might be deduced ; there are six scenes which follow one another in two acts, without any one being repeated ; they are invented with very judicious variety and gradation. One sees from them that the artist is ac-

quainted with all the resources of genuine architecture ; even where he builds as would not and should not be built, everything nevertheless retains the appearance of possibility, and all his structures are grounded on the idea of what is required in the real. His embellishments are very rich, but introduced and distributed with pure taste. In these is visible the great stucco school, which exists in Milan, and of which a knowledge can be got in the prints of Albertolli. All proportions tend to the slender, all figures, statues, bas-reliefs, painted lookers-on likewise ; but the extraordinary length, and violent postures of many figures, are not mannerism, but necessity and taste have so required them. The coloring is irreproachable, and the style of painting remarkably free and decisive. All the deceptions of perspective, all the attractions of masses directed towards certain points, are displayed in these works. The parts are perfectly distinct and clear, without being hard, and the whole is in the most admirable keeping. One beholds the studies of a great school, and the transmitted accumulations of several generations in the endless details, and one is authorized to say that here this Art has reached its highest point ; it is only a pity that the man's health is so feeble that his life is despaired of. I will see to putting better together and developing what I have here hastily thrown out.

And so farewell, and let me hear from you soon. I have been often with you on your still height, and when it rains hard I recollect the purling of the Leutra and its gutters.

I will not return until I at least feel a surfeit of the empirical, as we cannot conceive of a totality. Fare you right well, and greet all.

G.

CCCXLIX.

FRANKFORT, 16th August, 1797.

I HAVE fallen upon a thought, the which, because it may become important for the rest of my journey, I will at once communicate to you, in order to hear your opinion as to how far it may be correct, and how far I shall do well to surrender myself to its guidance? Whilst I went my quiet and cold way of observer, nay, of mere seer, I very soon remarked that the account I gave myself of certain objects, had a kind of sentimentality, which struck me to that degree that I was instantly moved to reflect upon its cause, and I found the following. In general, that which I see and experience attaches itself right well to all my other knowledge, and is not disagreeable to me, because it goes into the general mass of what I know, and helps to increase the capital. On the other hand, I could not name anything in the whole journey, that has in any way excited my sensibility, but I am now as calm and unmoved as I always have been amidst the commonest circumstances and incidents. Whence therefore this apparent sentimentality, which to me is the more remarkable, because, for a long time I have felt no trace of it in my nature, except the poetic mood. Might there not therefore in this case be the poetic state in connection with an object that is not entirely poetic, whereby is produced a certain middle condition?

I have therefore attentively considered the objects that produce such an effect, and to my astonishment observed that they are in fact symbolical, that is, as I scarcely need say, they are eminent cases, which in a characteristic manifoldness stand for the representatives of many others, embrace in themselves a certain totality, require a certain

sequence, excite in my mind things similar and foreign, and thus from without as from within make pretension to a certain unity and universality. What a happy subject is to the poet they are to the man, and as in recapitulating them to one's self, one cannot give them any poetic form, one must nevertheless give them an ideal one, a human in the higher sense, what with a so very misused term I called sentimental. And you will therefore not laugh, but only smile, when, to my own astonishment, I tell you, that if I should note down anything from my travels for friends or for the public, I probably shall be in danger of writing sentimental travels. Yet I would not, as you well know me, fear any word, even the most decried, if the treatment justified me, nay, if I could be so fortunate as to restore to a decried word its dignity.

I refer you to what you have yourself so beautifully unfolded, to what is the habitual use of language between us, and proceed. When is a sentimental object (which we may not despise, however troublesome it be) intolerable? I answer, when the ideal is directly united with the common. This can only happen through an empty formless manner, for both are thereby annihilated, the idea and the object; the former, which can only be significant, and busy itself with what is significant, and the latter, which can be right stirring, stout and good, without being significant.

So far I have found only two such objects; the public square on which I live, which, as respects its position and all that takes place upon it, is at every moment symbolical; and the area of my grandfather's house, yard, and garden, which, from the contracted patriarchal condition in which an old magistrate of Frankfort lived, was through shrewd

enterprising men changed into a useful place for goods and markets. Through singular casualties the establishment went down at the time of the bombardment, and is now, although mostly a heap of rubbish, worth notwithstanding, double of what eleven years ago was paid by the present proprietors to my family. In so far as it is easy to conceive that the whole be again bought and re-established by a new undertaker, you readily perceive that especially for me it must stand there as symbol of many thousand other cases in this thriving, trafficking city.

In this case there is to be sure the addition of a very cherished recollection; but if, made heedful by those cases, I shall in future, as I proceed on my journey, direct my attention not so much to the *remarkable* but to the *significant*, I should not fail to reap for myself and others a fine harvest. I will try here further what I can observe that is symbolical, but practise myself particularly on strange places, which I see for the first time. Should that succeed, without wishing to pursue the trial very extensively, if on every public square, in every moment, one went deeply into the matter, so far as it were given one to go, one could not fail to carry off booty enough yet out of well-known lands and regions.

Tell me what you think of this in order that I may be expanded, confirmed, invigorated and cheered. The matter is important, for it cancels at once and happily the contradiction which lay between my nature and experience, which formerly I could never solve. For I acknowledge to you that I would rather have returned directly home, to work out of the centre of my own being all kinds of phantoms, rather than (inasmuch as it is not given to me to count up individual facts) have buffeted with the million-

faced hydra of Empiricism ; for whoever cannot look for enjoyment and advantage from it, should withdraw in good time.

So much for to-day, although I have an important kindred chapter to treat of, which I shall on the next occasion take up, and shall beg you to give me your thoughts upon it likewise. Fare you right well, greet your family for me, and let no one, except those nearest to you, know or learn anything of my letters.

FRANKFORT, 17th August, 1797.

G.

CCCL.

JENA, 17th August, 1797.

THE picture which you give me of Frankfort and of large cities in general is not encouraging either for the poet or for the philosopher, but its truth is vividly evident ; and as it is an established point, that a man philosophizes and poetizes only for himself, there is, therefore, nothing to be said against it ; on the contrary, it confirms one in the good way already entered on, and cuts off every attempt to make use of poetry for anything outward.

From my little experience, thus much has become clear to me, that, upon the whole, one cannot through poetry make people happy, but on the contrary, very uncomfortable, and it seems to me that where the one is not to be attained, there we should aim for the other. One must incommode them, destroy their self-satisfaction, put them into a state of uneasiness and astonishment. Poetry must either confront them as a Genius or a Spectre. Only thereby do they learn to believe in the existence of Poetry and get to respect the Poet. I have moreover nowhere found this respect greater than in this class of people, although no-

where so unfruitful and so without inward feeling. Something there is in all that speaks for the poet, and however unbelieving a realist you may be, you must nevertheless concede to me that this X is the seed of idealism, and that nothing but this prevents real life with its common empiricism from annihilating all susceptibility for the poetical. It is indeed true, that the genuine poetical and æsthetic condition of mind is far from being thereby encouraged; that it is rather often prevented thereby, just as freedom is through moral tendencies; but much is already gained that an egress out of empiricism is opened.

With my protégé, Mr. Smith, I have, I see, acquired little honor, but I will hope the best so long as I can. I happen to be in that desperate state, that it must be of moment to me whether other people are worth anything, and whether something can be made out of them; therefore, I will give up these Schmidts and Hoelderlins as late as possible.

Mr. Smith, as he now is, is indeed the counterpart-caricature of the Frankfort empirical world, and as this has not time to go into itself, so he and his like cannot go out of themselves. In the one case, I might say, we see sensibility enough, but no object for it; in the other the naked empty object without sensibility. And thus these are everywhere only materials for a man such as the poet needs, but they are scattered and have not taken hold of one another.

I should like to know whether these Schmidts, these Richters, these Hoelderlins, are absolutely, and would under all circumstances have remained, so subjective, so overstrained, so monosyllabic? Whether it is owing to something primitive, or whether only the want of an

æsthetic nourishment and influence from without, and the opposition of an empiric world in which they live to their ideal tendency, has produced this unhappy effect? I am much inclined to believe the latter, and although a powerful and happy nature triumphs over everything, it yet seems to me, that many a brave talent is lost in this way.

It is certainly a very true remark you make, that a certain earnestness and heartiness, but no freedom, calmness and clearness, are to be met with in those of a certain class who take to poetry. Earnestness and heartiness are the necessary natural consequence when an inclination and occupation finds contradiction; and the merchant's son who makes poems, must already be capable of a greater degree of heartiness than common in order to have struck into such a path. But it is just as natural that he should turn more to the moral than to the æsthetic side, because he feels with passionate violence, because he is driven into himself, and because objects rather repel than hold him fast, so that he can never attain to a clear and calm survey of them.

On the other hand, as confirmation of your remark, I find that those who betake themselves to poetry out of a liberal condition, display a certain freedom, clearness, and lightness, but little earnestness and heartiness. With the former, the *characteristic* stands out almost to the extent of caricature, and always with a certain one-sidedness and hardness; with the latter, want of the characteristic, flatness, and almost shallowness are to be feared. I should say that the latter are nearer to the æsthetic in form, the former in substance. On a comparison between our Jena and Weimar poetesses I have hit upon observations which I purpose hereafter communicating to you.

I informed you that I had told A. my mind in a letter,

and that I was anxious to have his answer. He has now written to me, and is very thankful for my candor. But how little can be done for him I perceive from this, that he enclosed me the leaf containing the table of contents of his Poems, which none but a lunatic can have written. Certain people are not to be helped, and especially not he whose brow God has encircled with a brazen band.

At last you receive the *Ibycus*. May you be satisfied with it. I acknowledge that on nearer examination of the subject I found more difficulties than I at first expected; however, I think I have for the most part overcome them. The two chief points whereon a successful execution hung, seemed to me, first, to bring into the narration a continuity which the rude fable had not; and, secondly, to create the mood for the effect. I have not yet been able to put the last hand to it, as I only got through last evening; and I am very desirous that you read the Ballad at once, in order that I may make use of your remarks. The most agreeable thing to me would be to hear, that in the essential points I have met your views.

Herewith are also two specimen sheets of the Almanac. My next letter to you I shall enclose directly to Cotta, as I presume that towards the end of the month you will be no longer in Frankfort.

For eight days past my health has been better, and in my house, likewise, all are well. My wife greets you heartily. From the Humboldts I have heard nothing further since their departure from Dresden. Out of the remains of Gotter I have received his Opera, *the Island of Spirits*, taken from Shakspeare's *Tempest*. I have read the first Act, which is very weak and a meagre dish. I, however, thank Heaven that I have some sheets in the

Horen to fill up, and that, too, with so classical a writer, who, before his death, complained so bitterly of the *Xenia*. And thus then we force Gotter, who, living, would have nothing to do with the *Horen*, to stalk therein, dead.

Farewell ; let me soon again hear from you.

SCH.

CCCLI.

FRANKFORT, 22d August, 1797.

YOUR rich and beautiful parcel was yet in time to reach me here. In a few days I expect to go away, and can still from this say to you a few words about the contents.

The Almanac makes already an imposing show, especially when one knows what is yet to come. The narrative poems give it a peculiar character.

The *Cranes of Ibycus* I find very well done ; the transition to the Theatre is very fine, and the Chorus of the Eumenides in the right place. This turn being now discovered, the whole fable can no longer stand without it, and I should likewise be obliged to adopt this chorus, if I could still think of treating the subject.*

Upon the genuine condition of an observing traveller, I have now my own experience, and I have discerned wherein very often lies the fault of books of travels. Let a man place himself as he will, yet in a journey he sees things only from one side, and is hasty in judgment ; but, on the other hand, he sees things from this side in a very lively manner, and his judgment is in a certain sense correct. I have, therefore, had a blank book made, into

* From this, and from a passage in a former letter, it seems that Goethe had had the project of a poem on the same subject. As my readers have not Schiller's poem before them, I omit from Goethe's letter a page of minute criticism.

which I stitch all kinds of public papers that just now fall in my way, newspapers (daily and weekly), extracts from sermons, ordinances, play-bills, price-currents, and then I add as well what I see and remark, as also my judgment at the moment; I then talk of these things in company, and bring forward my opinion, and thus I soon see in how far I am well-informed, and in how far my judgment coincides with the judgment of well-informed men. I then add likewise this new experience and instruction to the other papers, and thus there are materials which in future must be interesting enough as history of the outward and inward. If, with my previous knowledge and my mental practice, I choose to continue for awhile this handiwork, I can collect a large mass.

I have already discovered one or two poetical subjects, which I shall lay up in my heart; and then one can never know in the first moment what in the sequel will separate itself from the rough experience as true substance.

With all this I will not deny that oftentimes I have a yearning towards the banks of the Saal, and were I transported thither to-day, I should be able at once, without so much as a look backward, to begin my Faust or some other poetical work.

Of Wallenstein, you think, I suppose, at present, little or not at all, as the Almanac must be provided for. Let me hear something of it whenever you get further forward.

The Theatre here is, in a certain sense, not bad, but much too weakly provided with actors; it suffered, it is true, a year since, a very hard shock; I really do not know what piece of value and dignity they could now play here tolerably.

CCCLII.

FRANKFORT, 23d August, 1797.

YESTERDAY Hoelderlin was with me ; he looks somewhat depressed and sickly, but he is very pleasing and open with modesty, nay with timidity. He entered upon several topics in a manner which betrayed your school ; many leading ideas he had appropriated to himself right well, so that he could also again easily take up many things. I particularly advised him to make small poems, and to select for each a subject with a human interest. He seemed still to have some inclination towards the middle ages, in which I could not confirm him. I shall not see Captain Steigentesch. He goes and comes ; my inquiries have missed him several times, and a note which I left for him the last time, he will probably receive after my departure. Greet your dear wife, and our poetic female friends. I have always hoped to be able yet to send you something for the Almanac ; perhaps the Swabian air will be more fruitful. It is only on leaving this that I go properly into a foreign land, and shall long the more eagerly to find a letter from you at Cotta's.

G.

CCCLIII.

FRANKFORT, 24th August, 1797.

BEFORE leaving this, I will tell you of a work I have begun, and which will do well for the *Horen*. I have before me about two hundred French satirical engravings ; I have at once classed them, and find them directed :

I. *Against foreign countries.*

a. England.

b. The Pope.

c. Austria.

II. *Against themselves.*

a. The old reign of terror.

b. Follies of Fashion.

1. Represented in their exaggeration.

2. In relation to one another.

3. In relation to antiquated follies.

4. In relation to finance or other political matters.

c. Against enemies of artists.

I have now begun to describe them singly, and it goes very well; for as they mostly address something to thought, are witty, symbolical, allegorical, they tell as well and even better to the imagination than to the eye. Thus one can make very good remarks about French genius and art in general, and although one neither can nor will imitate Lichtenberg, nevertheless the single pictures present themselves very gaily and airily, so that they will be very pleasant reading. In Switzerland I shall, no doubt, find others, and perhaps the earlier ones. Out of this a very pretty article would grow up, through which the October number would get a considerable contribution. In the *Mercury* and *Journal of Fashion*, and elsewhere, some have already been inserted, which I now embrace in the whole mass. I hope that various things of this and a like sort will turn up on the journey, and that from October on I shall be able to furnish some lively contributions; for after all, one has only to take it in hand, and then it will be done. The present Almanac gives me double pleasure, for we have brought it into being by sheer will and resolution. If you will but go on cheering your poetic friends of both sexes and keep them active, we shall then only have to set ourselves down together again next spring for four weeks, and the next one will also be completed.

Farewell, and write me often and much. My trunk is gone to Stuttgart, and if the weather, which for some time has been rainy, cold, and gloomy, clears up again as it promises to do, I shall have the horses put to. I should like to have a very fair day for the "mountain-road."

G.

CCCLIV.

JENA, 30th August, 1797.

I BELIEVED myself on the road of improvement when I last wrote to you, but for eight days past I have been suffering with a catarrhal fever and an obstinate cough which rages in my whole household. The fever has left me in quiet to-day, but the cough torments me very much, and my head is racked. I wished only to mention this, my dear friend, in excuse for my silence.

We await news from you with longing, and would like to know where we have now to look for you. Herewith you receive new sample sheets.

Your dear letter, which I received on the 20th, I must defer answering until my head gets clear again.

Even on your journey I must plague you, dear friend. Do think at times of the *Horen*, whether the journey itself could not furnish something to it. The need is great, and now the more so as I myself am unfit for any helpful work. With such interruptions I shall have trouble to find time and mood for my *Bell*, which is yet far from being cast.

Fare you well and cheerful, and continue to give me life from a distance. We and all that belongs to us think of you with the heartiest interest. My wife greets you a thousand times. Farewell.

SCH.

A few minutes since your last letter came in to our great and unexpected joy. Hearty thanks for what you say of the *Ibycus*, and whatever of your suggestions I can follow, I shall certainly do so. On this occasion again I have been made very sensible of how much is done even in invention by a vivid knowledge.

Once more, thanks for your letter. If my state will permit it, I will write to you the day after to-morrow.

Fare you right well.

SCH.

CCCLV.

STUTTGART, 30th August, 1797.

AFTER having last night often invoked you for your support, as the patron saint of all the children of men who suffer from sleeplessness, and also felt myself really strengthened by your example to survive one of the worst of bug-adventures in the belly of the Roman Emperor ;* it is now in conformity with my vow to inform you immediately of my condition.

On the 25th I left Frankfort, and had a pleasant drive under a covered sky to Heidelberg, where, with a perfectly clear sunshine, I spent nearly all the next day in beholding the country with ecstasy.

On the 27th I set off very early, rested during the heat in Sinzheim, and arrived still early enough at Heilbronn. This town with its environs interested me much ; I remained there the 28th, and on the 29th started so early that already by nine o'clock I was in Ludwigsburg ; in the evening at five I again drove off, and at sundown arrived

* Probably the name of an Inn.

at Stuttgart, which, in its circle of mountains, lay serenely in the twilight.

This morning, early, I made, alone, a rapid survey of the town ; its situation, as well as particularly its avenues, please me very well. In Mr. Rapp I found a very amiable man and valuable amateur of Art ; he has a right pretty talent for landscape drawing, good knowledge and practice. We went merely to Professor Dannecker's, where I found a Hector who upbraids Paris, a model executed in plaster somewhat above the size of life, likewise a reclining, naked, female figure, in the character of the love-sick Sappho, finished in plaster and begun in marble ; further, a small mourning, sitting figure, for a monument in a room. I saw further with him the model in plaster of a head of the present Duke, which, particularly in marble, is said to be very successfully executed, as also his own bust, which is full of genius and life without exaggeration. But what particularly struck me was the original cast of your bust, which has such truth and finish, that it really creates astonishment. The cast which you possess gives no idea of this work. The marble is to be cut after it, and if the execution is successful, there will be a very significant piece of sculpture. I saw also small models quite cleverly conceived and sketched ; only he fails there where our moderns all fail, in the choice of subjects. This topic which we have so often discussed, and lastly again on occasion of the treatise on Laocoon, always presents itself to me in its higher importance. When shall we poor Artists of these latter times lift ourselves up to this chief idea !

I likewise saw with him a vase of grey striped alabaster, by Isopi, of whom Wolzogen told us so much. It

exceeds, however, all description, and no one can, without beholding it, form a conception of this perfection of work. The stone, in respect to color, is not favorable, but so much the more in its substance. As it can be more easily wrought than marble, things are possible in it to which marble would not adapt itself. If Cellini, as is to be presumed, thus designed and finished his leaves and ornaments, one cannot take it ill of him if he himself speaks of his work with ecstasy. —

They have begun to rebuild the portion of the palace which was burnt down under Duke Charles, just as it was finished, and they are now at work on the cornices and ceilings. Isopi models the parts, which are then cast and set in by other workmen. His decorations are very spirited and tasteful; he has a particular fancy for birds, which he models very well, and combines agreeably with other embellishments. The composition of the whole has something original and light.

In Professor Scheffauer's studio (himself I did not find in), I saw a sleeping Venus, with an Amor, who is uncovering her, of white marble, well executed and well placed; only the arm, which she has brought backward under her head, had not a good effect from the chief point of view. Some bas-reliefs, of antique purport; likewise the models of the monument, which the consort of the present Duke is erecting upon the recovery of the Duke, brought about by the prayers of the people and the family. The Obelisk stands already on the palace square, ornamented with plaster casts.

In the absence of Professor Hetsch, his wife showed us his work-room. His family picture, in full length figures of the size of life, has much merit, particularly is

his own remarkably true and natural. It was painted in Rome. His portraits are very good and animated, and are said to be very excellent likenesses. He is at work on an historic picture, out of the Messiah, where Marie converses with Porcia, the wife of Pilate, of the bliss of eternal life, and convinces her of it. What say you on the whole to this choice? And what can a beautiful face express which is to feel in anticipation the ecstasy of Heaven? Moreover, for the head of Porcia he has made two studies after nature, the one from a Roman woman, a splendid brunette, full of spirit and feeling, and the other from a blonde, a good soft German. The expression of both faces is, as might be expected, anything but unearthly; and even if a picture could be thus made, no individual features should appear in it. Meanwhile, one would like to have the Roman head always before one's eyes. A thought so arch-German vexed me. Alas! that the good plastic artist will vie with the Poet, while, through what he alone can do, and should do, he might bring the Poet to despair!

I found Professor Mueller at the portrait of Graff, which Graff painted himself. He is also busy with the *Death of a General*, and that an American, a young man, who fell at Bunker Hill. The picture is by an American, Trumbull, and has merits of the artist, and faults of the amateur. The merits are, very characteristic and admirably handled portrait faces; the faults, disproportions between the different bodies, and between their parts. It is composed, relatively to the subject, right well, and, for a picture in which there must be so many red uniforms, very judiciously colored; yet, at the first view, it makes a glaring impression, until one gets reconciled to it on account of

its merits. The engraving makes a very good whole, and is in its parts excellently done. I saw, likewise, the admirable engraving of the last King in France, displayed in a capital impression.

Towards evening, we visited Counsellor Rueff, who possesses an admirable collection of drawings and engravings, whereof a part, for the pleasure and convenience of amateurs, is hung up under glass. Then we went to Mr. Rapp's garden, and I had once more the pleasure of enjoying the intelligent opinions so well grounded in feeling, of this man upon many subjects of Art, as well as Dannecker's sprightliness.

G.

CCCLVI.

31st August, 1797.

HERE you have about the purport of my yesterday, which, as you see, I spent very well. For the rest, there were many more remarks to be made. Particularly sad for architecture was the observation, what Duke Charles with his striving after a certain magnitude might have effected, if he had had the true sense for this Art, and if he had been so fortunate as to find able artists for his edifices. But it is obvious his inclination was merely for a certain imposing showy style, without taste, and in his earlier days architecture had declined in France, whence he took his models. I am now full of desire to see Hohenheim.

After all this that I have written down, as if to yourself a great part of it were not already known, I must tell you, that on the way I fell upon a poetic form, in which we hereafter must do more, and which perhaps will do good to the next Almanac. I mean *Conversations in Songs*.

We have, in a certain elder German period, right clever things of the sort, and in this form much may be said, only one must enter well into it, and get at what is peculiar to the species. I have begun such a conversation between a youth, who is in love with the maid of a mill, and the mill-stream, and hope to send it to you soon. Through this direction, life is given to the poetic, figurative, allegorical, and especially when travelling, where so many objects address themselves to you, it is a very good species.

On this occasion, likewise, it is note-worthy to consider what subjects adapt themselves to this particular mode of treatment. I cannot tell you, to repeat my former complaint, how much mistakes as to subjects at present disturb me, especially on account of the sculptors: for these artists evidently pay the dearest for the fault and the stupidity of the time. So soon as I get with Meyer, and can use his reflections, which he has announced to me, I will set immediately to work and put together in writing at least the chief points. In the meantime, do you too reflect further on poetic forms and subjects.

Upon the dramatic-comic I have several times had occasion to think; the result is, that it can only be perceived in a large, more or less rough mass of people, and that, alas! with us we have no such capital out of which to draw usurious poetic interest.

Here they have suffered much, and continue to suffer, from the war. If the French took from the country five millions, the Imperial troops are said to have already consumed sixteen millions. On the other hand, a stranger is truly astonished at the prodigious fertility of this country, and comprehends the possibility of bearing such burthens.

You and yours are remembered with much love and pleasure; nay, I may well say, with enthusiasm. And herewith I say you a farewell for to-day. Cotta* has given me a friendly invitation to lodge with him; I have accepted it with thanks, as hitherto, especially in hot weather, I have suffered more in the inns than on the road.

CCCLVII.

4th September.

THIS letter may now at last go off; I hope to find one from you at Cotta's, in Tuebingen, where I purpose soon to arrive. Here it has gone very well with me, and I have had much satisfaction in the society into which your note introduced me. They have sought in all ways to entertain me, and to show me everything, and have made me acquainted with a number of persons. If Meyer were here, I could readily make up my mind to remain still longer. It is natural, that in the mass of art and science, I am just now beginning to discern many things that I could use to my advantage; for, it is really remarkable, what an active endeavor lives among these men. But what especially pleases me, and would make a longer residence agreeable, is, that in this short time with those persons whom I have seen often, I have, through interchange of ideas, really advanced in culture, so that the intercourse has been fruitful for both parties. Upon some leading points I have really had a clear understanding with Dannecker, and into some others Rapp appears to enter, who has a very comfortable, cheerful, liberal existence. It is true that his principles are yet the principles of an amateur, which, as is well known, have a quite pe-

* The celebrated publisher.

cular *tournure*, and one which is not exactly favorable to solid Art ; nevertheless, he feels naturally and with vivacity, and seizes readily the reasons of a judgment in Art, although it differs from his own. I think of leaving this the day after to-morrow, and hope to find a letter from you in Tuebingen.

In addition to my keeping a record with tolerable diligence of what happens to me, I have noted down various things that were put in motion in me by circumstances and conversations, whereby gradually short treatises arise, which perhaps in the end will unite together.

Farewell, and continue from time to time to write to me to the care of Cotta, who will always be informed of my place of residence.

G.

CCCLVIII.

YOUR letter of the 30th August, which I received on my arrival in Tuebingen, promises me that a second is soon to follow it, which however as yet has not come to hand ; if only the illness of which you write is not the cause of this delay.

I am glad that you can make use of what I wrote you about the Ibycus ; it was the idea whereon in fact I intended to build my performance ; conjoined with your otherwise successful treatment, the whole can thereby attain to completeness and roundness. If you can only get the *Bell* ready for this Almanac ! for this poem will be one of the most distinguished, and an especial ornament to the Almanac.

Since the 4th of September, when I dispatched my last letter, everything has gone well with me. I remained in

Stuttgart three days longer, in which I became acquainted with several more persons, and saw much that was interesting. As I could perceive that my relation to Rapp and Dannecker was growing closer, and that both were not disinclined to embrace some principles which I regard as theoretically so important, and they on their part communicated to me much that was good, agreeable, and useful, I resolved to read my *Herrmann* to them, which I then accomplished in one evening; I had every cause to be pleased with the effect it produced, and to all of us those hours were fruitful.

Since the 7th, I am in Tuebingen, whose environs I visited with pleasure in fine weather, during the first days after my arrival, and now I cheat a rainy season of its influence through social intercourse. At Mr. Cotta's I have a cheerful room, and between the old church and the academical buildings a friendly though narrow outlook into the Neckar valley. In the meanwhile I am preparing for my departure, and my next letter you will receive from Stäfa. Meyer is very well, and eagerly awaits me. It is not to be calculated what our meeting may be, and produce for us both.

The nearer I become acquainted with Mr. Cotta, the better he pleases me. For a man of energetic thought, and enterprising mode of business, he has so much temperance, gentleness, and collectedness, so much clearness and steadfastness, that he is to me a rare phenomenon. I have made acquaintance with several of the professors here, very valuable men in their departments, way of thought and life, who seem to be all well suited to their position, without at the same time exactly requiring an active academic circulation. The great institutions seem

to be like the great edifices that inclose them ; they stand like calm Colossuses grounded on themselves, and create no lively activity, which they don't need for their maintenance.

I have been singularly taken by surprise here, by a small work of Kant, which you no doubt will know—*Proclamation of the Near Conclusion of a Treaty for Eternal Peace in Philosophy*. A very valuable product of his well known way of thinking, which, like everything that comes from him, contains the most noble passages, but is also in composition and style more Kantish than Kant. It gives me great pleasure that the prominent philosophers, and the preachers of prejudice, could so vex him that he opposes them with all his power.

* * * * *

I must not forget to congratulate you on the happy progress of the Almanac, and on *Knight Toggenburg*.

G.

CCCLIX.

JENA, 7th September, 1797.

At last I begin to feel myself again and to find again my mood. After the departure of my last letter to you I got worse; I had not been so ill for a long while, until at last an emetic brought things into order again. Almost all my occupations ceased in the meanwhile, and the few tolerable moments that I had the Almanac laid claim to. Such an occupation, through its uninterrupted, inexorable monotony, has in it something salutary, as it abolishes all arbitrary action and presents itself undeniably like the day. You gather yourself up, because it must be, and the work does not go on the worse for the definite demands that you make on yourself. We shall soon be through with the

printing of the Almanac, and if the accessories, cover, title-page, and music, cause no delay, the little work may yet be sent off before Michaelmas. In the *Ibycus* I have undertaken, according to your advice, essential changes; the exposition is no longer so meagre, the hero of the Ballad excites more interest, the Cranes fill the imagination also more, and command the attention sufficiently so as at their last appearance not to be forgotten through what has gone before.

* * * * *

I have sent the Ballad in its altered form to Boettiger, to learn from him whether there is anything in it inconsistent with ancient Grecian usages. So soon as I get it back, I shall put the last finish to it, and then hasten with it to the press. In my next letter I hope to send it to you, together with all the rest of the Almanac printed. Schlegel, also, has sent me another tale, in which the story of Arion, with the dolphin, is treated. The conception were right good, but the execution seems to me cold, dry, and without interest. He would like, also, to handle Sacontala as a ballad, a strange undertaking for him, from which may his good angel preserve him.

Your letter of the 16th August I received much later, as Boettiger, who had to attend to it, was absent. The sentimental phenomenon in you doesn't at all astonish me, and I think you yourself have satisfactorily explained it. It is a want of poetic natures, not to say of the human mind generally, to bear around it as little as possible that is void, to appropriate to itself through feeling as much world as is going on, to look for the bottom of all appearances, and to require everywhere a whole of humanity. Is the object as individual empty and in a poetic view with-

out import, then the combining faculty will make a trial with it, and take hold of it by its symbolical aids, and thus out of it make a language for humanity. Always, however, is the sentimental (in the good sense) an effect of the poetic endeavor, which is not entirely satisfied, be it from causes which lie in the object, or from such as lie in the mind. Such a poetic demand, without a pure poetic mood, and without a poetic object, seems to have been your case, and what you consequently experienced in yourself is nothing but the common history of the sentimental mode of feeling, and confirms all that we have together established in regard to the matter.

Only one thing more must I mention in connection herewith. You express yourself as if much depended on the object, what I cannot grant. It is true the object must *signify* something, just as the poetic object must *be* something ; but at last it depends upon the mind whether an object shall mean anything ; and thus it seems to me that the empty and the significant lie more in the subject than the object. It is the mind that here fixes the boundary, and the common or genial I can also find here as everywhere only in the treatment, not in the choice of subject. What the two public squares were to you, would, perhaps, have been to you under other circumstances, with a more open, poetic mood, every *street*, *bridge*, every *ship*, a plough, or any other mechanic instrument.

By no means, however, reject these sentimental expressions, and give them expression as often as you can. Nothing, except the poetical, cleanses the mind so much of the empty and common as this view of things ; a world is thereby laid in the single object, and superficial appearances acquire thereby an infinite depth. Is it not poeti-

cal? still it is, as you yourself express it, human, and the human is always the beginning of the poetical, which is only its summit.

I have to-day, the 8th, received a letter from Cotta, who tells me that you have been in Stuttgart since the 30th. I cannot think of you in Stuttgart without at the same time falling into a sentimental mood. What would I have given sixteen years ago to meet you on that ground, and how strange it is to me when I think at the same time of the circumstances and conditions of mind which that place recalls to me and of our present relation.

I am curious how long you found inclination and cause to tarry in those regions. I hope my letter of the 30th found you still there; this one will probably reach you first in Zurich, and with our friend, whom I cordially greet.

Write me in your next letter what is to be done with the copies of the Almanac that are destined for you, whither and to whom I shall send them.

I am heartily glad that you have thought of the *Horen*. and give me cause to hope for something for October. With the arrangements you have made to master the mass of experience round you, inexhaustible materials must flow in to you.

It was very agreeable to me that Hoelderlin presented himself to you; he wrote me nothing about his intending to do it, and must, therefore, have taken courage all at once. Here is another poetic genius, of Schlegel's sort. You will find him in the Almanac. He has imitated Schlegel's Pygmalion, and furnished a symbolical Phæton in the same taste. The production is foolish enough, but the versification and single good thoughts give it some merit.

Farewell, and continue as heretofore to let me follow your spirit. Hearty greetings from my wife. Your little boy is, I hear, entirely restored.

SCH.

CCCLX.

JENA, 14th September, 1797.

To my joy I learn from your Stuttgart letters, that you like my native land, and that the persons whom I recommended to you have not given me the lie. I doubt not that these seven days which you yourself spent there with pleasure and profit, will make epochs for Dannecker and Rapp, and will have very good results. The first especially is highly capable of culture, and he wants nothing but good fostering from without, which should give to his rich natural abilities the proper direction.

It is only from a certain exuberance that I can account for his mistakes, as he otherwise takes hold of Art so earnestly, and in some leading points goes at its true essence ; it seems to me that his poetic imagination confounds itself with the artistic, in which he is by no means deficient.

In a general point of view, I ask you, on this occasion, whether the tendency of so many able artists of modern times to *poetise in Art*, is not to be explained from this, that in a period like ours there is no other passage to the æsthetic than through the poetic, and that consequently all artists who make pretension to genius, for the very reason that they have been aroused through a poetic sensibility, also show in plastic representation a poetic imagination. The evil were not so great had not unfortunately the poetic spirit in our times taken a special direction so unfavorable to the culture of art. But inasmuch as poetry has deviated so widely from its generic idea (through

which alone it stands in contact with the imitative arts), it is no good leader to art, and can at most exert in the artist a negative influence (by raising him above common nature), but by no means a positive active one (by designation of subjects).

And this aberration of plastic artists in modern times is to me satisfactorily accounted for through our ideas on *material* and *ideal* poetry, and furnishes a new proof of their truth. I represent the matter to myself as follows :

The poet and artist has two things to do ; to lift himself above the real, and to keep within the circle of the sensuous. Where both are combined, there is æsthetic art. But if his own nature is unpropitious, and not apt at forms, he quits not only the real, but too easily likewise the sensuous, and becomes ideal, and, if his understanding is weak, even fantastic ; but if, controlled by his own nature, he wishes to and must abide in the sensuous, he also readily confines himself to the real, and becomes, in the limited sense of the word, *material*, and if he is altogether wanting in imagination, servile and common. In neither case, therefore, is he æsthetic.

The reduction of empiric forms to æsthetic is the difficult operation, and here is generally wanting either the body or the spirit, truth or freedom. The old models, as well in the poetical as in the plastic, seem to me especially to afford this advantage, that they display an empiric nature, which is already reduced to an æsthetic one, and that, after a deep study of them, they can even give you hints as to the mode of effecting the reduction.

Out of despair at not being able to reduce the empiric nature wherewith he is surrounded to an æsthetic, the modern artist of lively fancy and genius prefers entirely to

abandon it, and seeks in the imagination for help against the empiric world, against reality. He puts a poetic substance into his work, which otherwise would be empty and barren, because it wants that substance which must be drawn out of the depths of the subject.

CCCLXI.

15th September.

It were admirable if you unfolded with Meyer your thoughts upon the choice of subjects for poetic and plastic representation. This matter stands connected with the inmost being of art, and would be, at the same time, through its immediate and easy application to real works of Art, very practical and engaging. I, for my part, will also try to set forth clearly my thoughts thereon.

For the present, it seems to me that we might with great advantage start from the idea of the *absolute definiteness of the subject*. It would namely become apparent, that all works of Art that have been failures through an unskilful choice of subject, are chargeable with such an indefiniteness, and the arbitrariness which is a consequence thereof.

The idea of what is called a *pregnant* moment, appears to me perfectly explicable through its qualification for a thoroughly definite precise representation. In the poetic class I know no case but your Herrmann. Here, perhaps, it might be shown by a kind of induction, that with every other choice of action, something must have remained indefinite.

If now, with this proposition, we combine the other, namely, that the selection of the subject must always take place through the means that are peculiar to one class of Art, that it must be made within the particular limits of each

species of Art, we should have, it seems to me, a sufficient criterion, not to be misled in the choice of subjects.

But in truth, even if this be sound, the application of the principle is difficult, and might in all cases be more an affair of feeling and of presentiment than of clear consciousness.

I am very curious about the new poetic genius, of which you intend soon to send me something. The rich shifting variety of your imagination astonishes and delights me, and although I cannot follow you, it is an enjoyment and a profit to me to send my eyes after you. From this new kind, I expect something very graceful, and understand already beforehand how well fitted it must be to impart a poetic life and a genial movement to the commonest subjects.

From our friend Humboldt I received letters to-day. He is no longer pleased with Vienna, and has also as good as given up the Italian journey, but is almost resolved to go to Paris, which however, probably, after the late events there, he will not carry into effect. He writes that about this time he will give you news of himself.

All are well in my house, and we yesterday celebrated with much joy Carl's birth-day. To-day we had Vent from Weimar, with us, whom I like very well; beyond this, my society has not been increased by any new figure. My wife thinks of you with hearty interest, and my brother and sister-in-law send their best regards to you.

Fare you right well. Greet Meyer, and remember me in your circle. Your letters are for us richly laden ships, and make at present one of my highest enjoyments Farewell.

SCH.

Do but look at the sheet in which I envelope.

CCCLXII.

JENA, 22d September, 1797.

YOUR letter, together with its accompaniment, gave us again great pleasure. The song is full of cheerful humor and nature. It seems to me that this species must on this account be very favorable to the poet, that it relieves him of all troublesome side-work, such as introductions, transitions, descriptions, and permits him to work with a light hand only at what is genial and significant in his subject.

Here, then, were the outset to a new collection, the beginning of an "infinite" series: for this poem has, like all good poetry, an entire class within itself, through the mood which it gives, and the form it presents.

I should have been very desirous of observing the impression which your Herrmann made on my Stuttgart friends. There was, I am sure, no want of a certain heartiness of reception, but so few men can calmly enjoy the naked of human nature. I, however, doubt not at all, that your Herrmann will thoroughly triumph over all these subjectivities, and do it through the finest quality in a poetic work, namely, through its whole, through the pure clearness of its form, and through the fully exhausted circle of human feelings.

My last letter already announced to you, that I was obliged to lay the *Bell* aside. I acknowledge that this, seeing that it had to be done, is not so entirely disagreeable to me; for it is only after carrying the subject about with me, and keeping it warm, that the poem, which is really no small task, can attain to its true ripeness. This, too, is the ballad-year, and the next has already quite the appearance of becoming the song-year, to which class also the *Bell* belongs.

In the meanwhile, I hav'n't lost the last eight days for the Almanac. Chance brought me a very pretty theme for a ballad, which, too, is nearly finished, and, I think, concludes the Almanac not unworthily. It consists of twenty-four stanzas of eight lines each, and is called, *The Going to the Forge*, from which you see that I lay claim also to the element of fire, after having travelled over water and air. The next post will deliver it to you, together with the Almanac, printed.

I wish very much that the *Cranes*, in the form in which you now read them, may satisfy you. They have unquestionably gained through the idea which you gave me for the exposition. I believe, also, that in the beginning the Strophe was wanting, which I have devoted to the Fairies, for their more precise delineation.

I have also read Kant's small treatise, and, although it contains nothing strictly new, I have enjoyed his fine thoughts. There is in this old gentleman still something so youthful, what one might almost call æsthetic, if the monstrous form, which might be called a philosophical chancery style, did not embarrass one. It may be with Schlosser as you say, nevertheless his position in reference to the critical philosophers has something in it so doubtful, that it was not to be expected that he should be left out. Moreover, it seems to me, that in all disputes where supernaturalism is defended against reason by thinking heads, there is cause for imputing bad faith; experience is altogether too old, and besides the thing is so intelligible.

We are now enjoying here very fine autumn days; with you, I suppose there are still left traces of summer. In my garden great operations are afoot, to improve it for

the coming years. We have had, however, no bad harvest of fruit, on which occasion Carl made much sport for us.

With the doubtful aspect of war and peace, we still doubt as to the speedy execution of your Italian journey, and sometimes give place to the hope that we may see you with us again sooner than we dared expect.

Farewell, and give to Meyer the most friendly greetings from me ; heartily do we wish you joy on your re-union. My wife sends you her best greetings.

SCH.

CCCLXIII.

STAEFA, 25th September, 1797.

YOUR most welcome letter of the 7th September, I received here the day before yesterday. As it was longer on the road than I hoped, I could not but fear that your disease had increased, which now, alas ! I learn from your letter was the case. Would that in your quietness you could enjoy as good health as I in my motion ! A sheet, which I enclose, will tell you how it has fared with me since I left Tuebingen. Meyer, whom now, to our mutual joy, I have found again, is as well as ever, and we have already chatted together about a thousand things. He comes back again with fine treasures of art, and with treasures of a very accurate observation. We have now to consider in what forms we shall use a portion of them, and for what purposes we shall lay by the other portion.

In a few days, we are going to the Lake of the Four Cantons. The great natural scenes which surround it I must behold once more, as we are so near them, for the rubric of these gigantic rocks must not be wanting among the chapters of my journey. I have already got together

a couple of stout bundles, wherein all that I have learnt or seen, or collected, is written or stitched in, so far the oddest mixture in the world, from which I cannot, as I at first hoped, pick out something for the *Horen*.

I hope yet to add much to this collection, and can thereby test myself on various subjects. There is an enjoyment after all, at last, when one feels that he can sum up so many things, the fruits of the great, and in the beginning apparently unfruitful, labors, with which he has in his life been tormented.

As Italy, through its earlier disturbances, and France through its latest, are more or less closed against foreigners, we shall, from the summit of the Alps, follow back the fall of the waters, and down the Rhine, turn our steps again towards the north, before the bad weather begins. Probably, we shall reside contented together this Winter, at the foot of the Foxtower; nay, I even surmise that Humboldt will keep us company. The whole caravan, as his letter tells me, which I received in Zurich, has likewise given up the journey to Italy; they are all coming to Switzerland. The younger intends to take a look at this country, which is in several respects so interesting to him; and the elder will probably have, under present circumstances, to give up a journey to France which he had projected. They leave Vienna on the first of October; perhaps I shall wait for them in this region.

And now I turn my thoughts to you and your labors. The Almanac makes really a good figure, only the public will miss the pepper to the melons. In general, nothing is so longed for as another cargo of *Xenia*, and people will be distressed not to be able to renew acquaintance with these rogues they have so much abused. I am very

glad that through my advice the beginning of your *Ibycus* has acquired a greater breadth and fullness ; as to the conclusion, it will turn out that you were right. The artist must himself know best in how far he can avail himself of others' suggestions. The *Phæton* is by no means badly made, and the old tale of the ever unsatisfied struggle of noble humanity after the original source of its charming existence, is worked up quite passably. Meyer could not read the Prometheus through, which is certainly a bad sign.

The copies of the Almanac which you intend for me have the goodness to lay by for me ; for you probably will have sent one in your own name to the reigning Duchess. I want much to see this little work together.

Out of my earlier letters you will have seen that everything went well and pleasantly with me in Stuttgart. You were often mentioned, and by many, and always in the best way. For us both, I believe it was an advantage that we came together later, and when we were more cultivated.

Tell me in your next letter how you intend to establish yourself for the coming Winter ? Whether your plan is directed upon the garden, the Griesbach House, or Weimar ? I wish you the most comfortable situation, in order that, with your other ills, you may not have to contend with the weather.

If, after the receipt of this, you write immediately, have the goodness to address the letter directly to Zürich, with merely the addition, *to the care of Captain Ott, at the Sword Inn*. I can calculate that this will be on the road eight days, that the answer will be the same, and I shall reach Zürich from my mountain excursion about the middle of October.

For the news that my little boy is well again, I am the more thankful to you, because for some time I have received no direct advices, and the letters from my home must be detained somewhere. This anxiety alone has given me many sad moments, whilst otherwise everything went well and happily.

Fare you well. Greet your dear wife, and enjoy the last fine days of autumn with your friends, whilst I am wandering in the high mountains. My correspondence will now make a small pause, until I am again returned hither.

G.

Brief account of my journey from Tuebingen to Staefa.

ON the 16th Sept., I set out from Tuebingen through Hechingen, Balingen, and Welledingen, to Tuttingen. It is a long day's journey. I made it from four o'clock in the morning to half-past eight in the evening. At first there is an agreeable country to the eye, but at last, when you get higher into the Neckar region, the land grows balder and less fertile ; it was not till dark that I reached the valley or dell, which leads down to the Danube ; the day was gloomy but agreeable for travelling.

The 17th, from Tuttingen to Schaffhausen. With the finest weather almost the whole way, the most interesting region. At seven o'clock I left Tuebingen in a thick fog, but on the height we found soon a clear sky, and the fog lay horizontally in the whole valley of the Danube. Whilst on the height which separates the regions of the Rhine and Danube, you have a noble prospect, as well backwards as sideways, as you overlook the valley of the Danube to

Doneschingen and further. But forwards the view is particularly grand ; you see the Lake of Constance and the Grison mountains in the distance, nearer, *Hohentwiel* and some other characteristic basalt rocks. You drive through wooded hills and valleys to Engen, whence, southwards, a beautiful fertile plain opens : then you pass by *Hohentwiel* and the other mountains which you first saw in the distance, and arrive at last into well-tilled and cleanly Switzerland. About Schaffhausen the whole country looks like a garden. I arrived there in the evening, in a fine sunshine.

The 18th I devoted entirely to the falls of the Rhine, drove early to *Laufen*, and from thence descended, in order at once to enjoy the vast astonishment. I contemplated the powerful scene, while the summits of the mountains and hills were covered with the fog, with which mingled the spray and mist of the fall. The sun came forth and glorified the spectacle, showed a part of the rainbow, and let me see the whole phenomenon of nature in its full brilliancy. I crossed over to the small castle *Woerth*, and now beheld the whole picture in front and from afar ; then I returned and drove from *Laufen* to the town. In the evening I drove out again on the right shore, and once more enjoyed with the setting sun this magnificent scene.

On the 19th, the weather beautiful, I drove to Zürich through *Eglisau*, having always before me the great chain of the Swiss mountains, through an agreeable, variegated, and carefully cultivated country.

The 20th, I spent a very cheerful forenoon in the promenades of Zürich ; in the afternoon the weather changed. Professor Meyer came, and, as it rained and stormed, we remained the night at Zürich.

On the 21st, with pleasant weather, we went up the lake in a boat, were kindly entertained at dinner by Mr. Escher, at his estate near Herrliberg on the lake, and arrived in the evening at Staefa.

The 22d, a gloomy day, we passed in examining the works of art prepared and acquired by Mr. Meyer, at the same time communicating to one another our observations and experience. In the evening we took a long walk upward in the place, which gives a captivating and ideal conception of the most beautiful and highest culture. The buildings stand far apart; vineyards, fields, gardens, orchards fill the space between them, and in this way the place extends two or three miles along the lake, and one mile eastward to the hill, whose whole side tillage has already conquered. Now we are preparing for a short journey, which we think of making to Einsiedel, Schwytz, and the regions around the lake of the four Cantons.

CCCLXIV.

I HAD almost forgotten to tell you that the verse,* “It bubbles, it hisses, and rushes and roars,” &c., is perfectly justified at the falls of Schaffhausen; it was to me remarkable how it embraces the chief moments of the prodigious scene. I endeavored on the spot to take in the phenomenon in its parts and as a whole, as it presents itself, and I separately noted the observations which one makes while beholding it, as well as the ideas it gives rise to. You will one day see how these few poetic lines run, as it were, like a thread, through this labyrinth.

I have just now received through Cotta the sheets J. K.

* In Schiller’s poem, *The Diver*.

of the Almanac, and hope, on my return from the mountains and lakes, to find more letters from you. Fare you right well. Meyer will himself write a few words. I have the greatest joy in his being in such good spirits and health; may I but hear the same from you.

I have discovered grand subjects for Idyls and Elegies, and by whatever names the other kindred sorts of poetry are called, and I have made some already, as, indeed, generally, I have never taken up strange objects with such ease, and, at the same time, produced something. Fare you well, and let us ever go on thus theoretically and practically.

CCCLXV.

JENA, 2d October, 1797.

* * * * *

Now that I have the Almanac behind me, I can again turn to the Wallenstein. When I review the scenes that are finished, I am on the whole satisfied with myself, only I think I perceive in them some dryness, which however I can perfectly explain to myself, and also hope to remove. It arose from a certain fear of falling into my former rhetorical manner, and from a too anxious endeavor to keep very near to the subject. Now the subject is in itself somewhat dry, and requires more than any other a practical liberality; it is here therefore more necessary than elsewhere to await a very pure poetic mood, if both by-ways, the *prosaic* and the *rhetorical*, are to be avoided with equal care.

I see indeed still before me a prodigious labor, but this much I know, it will not be labor wasted; for the whole is poetically organized, and, I can safely say, the material is converted into a pure tragic fable. The moment of the

action is so pregnant, that all that belongs to its completeness, naturally proceeds out of it—nay, in a certain sense, necessarily lies in it. Nothing in it is left to chance ; it is opened on all sides. At the same time I succeeded in giving to the action, from the beginning, such a proclivity and tendency, that with an unceasing and accelerated motion it hastens to its end. As the chief character is a retarding one, the events are all made to go in a circle, and this will, I think, very much heighten the tragic impression.

I have lately occupied myself in looking for a subject for tragedy, which should be like that of the *Œdipus Rex*, and afford to the poet the same advantages. Those advantages are immeasurable, although I only mention one, namely, that the compound action, which is entirely hostile to the tragic form, may be taken as the foundation, for this reason, that here this action has already taken place, and consequently falls without the tragedy. To this is added, that a deed done, is naturally, as being irrevocable, much more terrible ; and the dread that something may *have happened*, affects the mind quite differently from the dread that something may happen.

The *Œdipus* is, as it were, only a tragic analysis. All is already there, and it is only unfolded : that can take place in the smallest action and in a very small space of time, however complicated and dependent on circumstances the events might be. How favorable is not this to the poet !

But I fear the *Œdipus* is its own genus, and that there is no second species of it ; least of all would it be possible to find a counterpart to it in less fabulous times. The Oracle takes a share in the tragedy, and this it were utterly impossible to replace with anything else ; and

should one attempt to retain the substance of the fable, with changed persons and times, what is now terrible would become laughable.

I have not for a long while heard from you, and look with impatience for your next letter. Perhaps from it I shall learn something more definite about your journey and your future abode. From the Humboldts I have in the meantime heard nothing further; but I think it not improbable that they will yet turn their steps towards Switzerland.

How gets on your development of antique works of sculpture, of which the Laokoon is the beginning? I have read this again recently with the highest satisfaction, and cannot sufficiently say, to how many important fruitful ideas it leads, touching the organization of æsthetic works. Herrmann and Dorothea are making a noise in a quiet way; Körner too writes me that he has read the whole, and thinks that it belongs in one class with the best that you have written.

Farewell, dear friend! My wife greets you cordially. Many greetings to Meyer. The handsome copies of the Almanac are not yet ready. In the meanwhile I send you a common one.

CCCLXVI.

JENA, 6th October, 1797.

HEARTILY welcome to me was your and Meyer's letter, which I received a few hours since. I hasten to answer it, if only with a few lines, in order to send you a friendly greeting before your return out of the mountains. We have longed quite impatiently for accounts of you, and doubly joyful therefore to me is your letter to-day, which

gives me hopes of your early return. I really looked forward with a secret dread to the approaching winter, which now promises to be so cheerful to me. My health is again pretty good, but my little Ernest suffers severely from teething, and gives us much anxiety. With the departure of the good weather we shall move into our old abode in the town, and it may possibly suit us very well to live for a time in Weimar. Everything depends upon this, that I once get well settled upon Wallenstein; then no change of life will hurt me, which otherwise would so easily disturb me, who am very much a slave of habit.

I am not a little pleased, that according to your observation my description of the whirlpool agrees with the phenomenon. I have had no other opportunity of studying this natural scene than at a mill, but as I closely studied Homer's description of the Charybdis, this perhaps held me to nature. Perhaps your journey will take you by a forge also, and you can tell me whether I have correctly represented this smaller phenomenon.

I send to-day the first cargo of the Almanac to Leipsig, and am not a little curious as to its sale. It may be true that very few readers will thank us for abstaining from satiric things; for even those who were themselves hit, enjoyed the burning of their neighbor's house.

I must close, for the hour of the post is come. Note in your next letter whether I can continue to send my letters by Tuebingen, through Cotta. We heartily greet you and Meyer, whom I thank for his dear letter, as also my wife. Farewell.

SCH.

CCCLXVII.

STAEFA, 14th October, 1797.

ON a very rainy morning I remain lying in bed, my dear friend, to converse with you and to give you report of our condition, in order that, as heretofore, you may accompany us with your spirit, and delight us from time to time with your letters.

Scarcely had I found myself with our good Meyer in Zürich, scarcely had we arrived here together, scarcely had I enjoyed the works he brought with him, the pleasant country and its cultivation, when the near mountains gave me a certain disquiet, and the fine weather encouraged the wish to approach them, nay, to ascend them. The instinct which impelled me to this was very mixed and vague; I remembered the effect which these objects had made upon me twenty years before, the impression had upon the whole remained, the parts were effaced, and I felt a strange desire to repeat and rectify my former experience. I had become another man, and therefore objects could not but appear other to me. Meyer's good health and the conviction that light adventures in common, as they more quickly bind new acquaintances, so would they likewise be favorable to old ones, when these are to be revived after some interval, decided us fully, and we set out with the best weather, which for eleven days accompanied us most propitiously. In the enclosed I at least indicate the route we took; a full, although aphoristic diary I will in the sequel communicate to you. In the meanwhile, your dear wife, who knows a part of this region, will be able to supply something here and there out of her recollection.

On our return I found your two dear letters with the

enclosures, which immediately connected themselves to the conversation which, on the road, we had kept up very zealously, inasmuch as the topic of the subjects to be represented, and the treatment of them by the different Arts, was often discussed by us in quiet hours. Perhaps a short treatise will show you soon that we are fully of your mind, but most of all shall I rejoice when you hear and read Meyer's descriptions and opinions of so many works of Art. One learns on this occasion that a complete experience must embrace in itself the theory. We shall be so much the more certain of meeting in one centre, as we go at the matter from so many sides.

To speak to you of my own state, I can say, that so far I have every reason to be satisfied with my journey. Through the ease with which I seize hold of objects, I have become rich without being loaded; the material does not incommode me, because I know how to methodize it, or to work it up, and I feel more freedom than ever to select manifold forms to represent for myself or others what is worked up. From the barren summit of the Gotthardt to the admirable works of Art which Meyer has brought with him, a labyrinthic footpath leads us through an entangled series of interesting objects which this strange country contains. To bring before the mind through direct contemplation the natural-historical, geographical, economical and political conditions, and then by means of an old Chronicle to get nearer to past times, also to avail oneself of many a treatise of the industrious Swiss, all this gives, particularly with the circumscribed nature of Swiss existence, a very agreeable occupation, and as well the general view of the whole as the insight into particulars is especially facilitated thereby, that Meyer is here at home,

has, with his accurate and keen perception, been so long acquainted with the relations of everything, and preserves them in a faithful memory. Thus have we in a short time brought together more than I could imagine, and it is only a pity that we are too near the winter by a month; one more tour of four weeks could not fail to make us widely acquainted with this strange land.

But now what will you say when I inform you, that among all this prosaic material, a poetic one, too, has presented itself, which inspires me with great confidence? I am almost convinced that the fable of Tell will admit of being treated epically, and if I succeed in my design, the singular case would occur that the tale would first attain to its complete truth through poetry, instead of which in other cases one must turn history into fable in order to produce something. But of that more hereafter. The limited highly significant *locale*, in which the events play, I have again very accurately impressed on my mind; and I have also observed, as well as was possible in the short time, the characters, manners, and customs of the people in these regions, and it depends now upon good luck whether anything comes out of this undertaking.

But now a question arises, which for us is from time to time doubtful; whither we shall betake ourselves in order to work up most conveniently and speedily as well Meyer's collections as my own old and new stock? Unhappily here in this place the lodgings are not calculated for Winter, otherwise I would not deny that I should have been quite inclined to remain here, as the complete solitude would have furthered our object not a little. To this is added, that it would have been the most suitable place to await whether Italy or France will again invite or

admit the traveller next Spring. In Zurich itself I cannot imagine a tolerable existence, and so we shall now slowly return to Frankfort.

I have, however, hit upon an idea, for carrying the which into execution only a little habit is wanted; it would, namely, not be difficult to arrange in such a way that one could work with self-possession and satisfaction while on the journey. For if at certain times travelling distracts, at others, on the contrary, it throws us the more quickly back on ourselves; the want of outward relations and connexions, nay, the tedium, is favorable to him who has various things to work up. Travel is like a game; there is always gain or loss, and mostly from the unexpected side; you receive more or less than you hope for; you can, with impunity, loiter along for a while, then you are again obliged to gather yourself up a moment. For natures like mine, that like to establish themselves firmly and hold fast to things, a journey is invaluable; it animates, instructs and cultivates.

I am also now convinced that one could very well go to Italy: for, after an earthquake, a fire, or a flood, everything in the world settles down as quickly as possible into its old condition, and I should undertake the journey without personal apprehension, if other considerations did not withhold me. Perhaps, therefore, we shall see each other very soon again, and the most agreeable hope that attracts me towards home is that of sharing with you the booty I have taken, and to attain to an ever closer union theoretically and practically. We will see what more we can still pick up on the way. Thus Basle, on account of its proximity to France, has a particular charm for me; fine works of Art are also to be found there.

The conclusion of the Almanac I hope still to receive in Zurich ; Cotta is very regular in his transmissions.

The Ibycus I find very well done, and the conclusion cannot be improved. I wish now much to overlook the whole. As my Pretty Maid of the Mill has found a good reception, I send another song that we owe to her charms. It will be very well if the next Almanac is rich in songs, and the Bell must only sound so much the better for the metal having been kept longer in flux and purified of all dross.

G.

CCCLXVIII.

STAEFA, 17th October, 1797.

I HAVE not been able to find either time or mood to make an extract out of my larger diary, in order to advise you more particularly of our mountain tour ; I will therefore briefly just say here, that we went from Richterswiel to Einsiedel, and thence to Schwytz and Brunnen : from thence we went by the lake to Fluellen, thence to Altorf, and ascended the Gotthardt, and returned. In Fluellen we took boat again and landed at Beckenrieth, in the Canton of Unterwalden, went on foot to Stanz and Stanz-Stade, whence we crossed the lake to Küsnacht, went to Immensee, took boat to Zug, walked to Horgen, and in a boat came again over here to Staefa.

On this short journey we saw the greatest variety of objects and met with the most different climates, of which hereafter more.

On the famous matter *of the subjects of the plastic arts*, a small treatise is sketched and in some measure executed ; you will find in it the passages of your letter as notes.

We are now on the *motives*, as the second in importance after the subject is given : for only through motives does the inner organization take place ; then we shall pass to the *composition*, and thus proceed. We shall confine ourselves to plastic art, and are curious how it will coincide with the poetry which we herewith again commend to you.

Fare you right well—greet those dearest to you. If you wish to say a word in answer to this letter, only send it to Cotta. Since yesterday the accounts from the Rhine sound very warlike, and in the end we shall have to sneak home by a back way through Swabia and Franconia. Once more the best farewell.

Meyer sends best greetings. Just at this moment the *Aldobrandinian Marriage* has arrived, which we have been long expecting from Rome, through Trieste, Villach and Constance. All our treasures are now together, and we can now enter upon our journey, quieted and gladdened on this point likewise.

G.

CCCLXX.

JENA, 20th October, 1797.

A FEW days since Böttejer sent us two handsome copies of your *Herrmann*, with which we were much pleased. So then it is now fairly in the world, and we shall hear how the voice of an Homeric rhapsodist will sound in this modern politico-rhetorical world. I have read the poem again with the old unweakened impression and with new emotion ; it is absolutely perfect in its kind, it is powerful in pathos, and yet graceful in the highest degree ; in short, it is beautiful, say what one will.

Meister also I have read again quite lately, and it was never so strikingly apparent to me how much there is in the outward form. The form of Meister—as generally the form of every novel—is absolutely not poetical; it is entirely confined to the region of the understanding, is subjected to all the understanding's requisitions, and shares also all its limits. But because it is a thoroughly poetic genius, who avails himself of this form, and in this form expressed poetic conditions, there arises a singular fluctuating between a prosaic and a poetic mood, for which I have no appropriate name. I might say there is wanting to Meister (that is, to the novel) a certain poetic boldness, because, as novel, it always aims to satisfy the understanding; and at the same time there is wanting a sobriety (which itself gives you cause to expect), because it has flowed out of a poetic spirit. Spell this together as you can; I give you merely my feeling.

As you stand on such a point, that you must require of yourself the highest, and the objective and subjective must flow wholly into one, it is therefore very necessary to take care that that which your genius can put into one work, shall always seize the purest form, and that nothing be lost in an impure medium. Who does not feel in Meister what it is that makes Herrmann so enchanting! The former wants nothing of your genius; it seizes hold of the heart with all the powers of poetry, and gives an ever self-renewing enjoyment; and yet Herrmann leads me (and that solely through its pure poetic form) into a divine poetic world, while Meister does not entirely let me out of a real world.

As I am criticising, I will make one more remark, which forced itself upon me at this perusal. There is

obviously too much of tragedy in Meister; I mean the bodeful, the incomprehensible, the subjectively marvellous, which is indeed compatible with poetic depth and obscurity, but not with the clearness that should reign in the novel and does also reign in this one so pre-eminently. It incommodes one to come upon this want of solidity, where you think you feel firm ground everywhere under you, and to come upon such riddles, while everything else is so beautifully unravelled for the contentment of the understanding. In short, to me it seems that you have here availed yourself of a means to which the spirit of the work did not entitle you.

For the rest I cannot sufficiently say to you how much at this new reading Meister has enriched, animated, delighted me; for me there flows therein a spring at which I can draw nourishment for every faculty of the soul, and particularly for that one which is the combined action of all.

SCH.

CCCLXXI.

ZÜRICH, 25th October, 1797.

BEFORE I leave Zürich, only a few words! for I am very much pre-occupied, and shall, too, continue so for awhile, for we think of going to Basle, thence to Schaffhausen, Tuebingen, and so further; probably at the latter place, I shall again find something from you. No Almanac of the Muses, no Herrmann have I yet seen; all that, and more besides, I suppose I shall meet with in Germany.

Were the season not so far advanced, I should like to look about for a month longer in Switzerland, in order to

inform myself of the political and social relations generally. It is strange how old constitutions, that are merely founded on *being* and *conserving*, look in times when everything is striving towards *growth* and change. I will say nothing further to-day than a hearty farewell. From Tuebingen you will hear further from me.

G.

CCCLXXII.

JENA, 30th October, 1797.

THANK God that I once more have news of you ! These three weeks that you were travelling about in the mountains, cut off from us, got to be long to me. So much the more was I gladdened by your dear letter, and all that it contained. The idea of the William Tell is very happy, and rightly considered you could, after the Meister and the Herrmann, only treat a locally characteristic subject, such as this, with the full originality of your genius, and with freshness of mood. The interest which springs out of a strictly circumscribed characteristic locality, and a certain historical compactness, is perhaps the only one that you have not taken away from yourself by these two preceding works. These two works are, moreover, as regards the subject, æsthetically free, and however concentrated the *locale* looks and is in both, it is nevertheless a pure poetic ground, and represents a whole world. With Tell the case will be quite different ; out of the significant narrow bounds of the given subject will proceed the whole of the life and spirit. Here the poet will be able, by his power, to limit the reader, and in that limitation intensely to affect and occupy him. At the same time, out of this fine material will open itself a view into a certain wide expanse of the human race, as between high mountains a vista opens into the free distance.

How much I desire on account of this poem to be again with you ! You would, perhaps, now the more easily accustom yourself to speaking with me of it, as the unity and purity of your Herrmann was not in the least disturbed by your conversations about it with me while you were at work. And I acknowledge that I know nothing in the world from which I have learnt more than from those communications, which introduced me right into the centre of art.

The song of the Millstream is charming, and greatly delighted us. It is in an uncommonly pleasing dress, which allows the imagination a captivating play ; the measure, too, is very happily chosen. The distichs, likewise, are very pleasing.

Humboldt has written at last, and that from Munich. He is now on his way to Basle, where he will determine whether the journey to Paris shall be given up or not. You he will therefore hardly meet, unless you spend the winter in Zürich, whither he will betake himself if he does not go to Paris. A large salt-mine near Berchholdsgaden, into which he went, he describes very prettily. The Bavarian nation he seems to like very much, and a minister of war there, Rumford, he praises highly, on account of his beautiful and philanthropical institutions.

We are now again in the town, where we are all well. I am working zealously at the Wallenstein, but get on slowly notwithstanding, because the bulky and unmanageable material gives me so very much to do.

The Almanac you have now received, as well as my letters of the 2d, 6th, and 20th October, as I hope.

Fare you right well, with Meyer, whom we heartily greet. May our good genius soon bring you back to us.

My wife will herself write you a few lines. I recently read the Herrmann to a company of friends in one evening from beginning to end ; it again affected us indescribably, and to me it brought back again so vividly the evenings when you read it to us, that I was doubly moved. Once more, farewell !

SCH.

CCCLXXIII.

TUEBINGEN, 30th October, 1797.

WE gave up the tour to Basle, and have come directly to Tuebingen. The season, weather and road, are no longer inviting, and as we do not wish to remain abroad, we can now from this turn our steps towards home ; what way we shall take, is still undecided.

The Almanac we first received here, and enjoyed especially the *Forge*. You have scarcely done anything with such happy humor, and the retarding Mass is of the best effect. The Secret, also, is very praiseworthy.

I am glad that Herrmann is in your hands, and that he holds his own. What you say of Meister, I understand perfectly well ; it is all true, and even more. It was precisely its incompleteness that gave me the most trouble. A pure form helps and supports, while an impure one everywhere hinders and drags. He may, however, be what he is ; it will not easily happen to me again to make a mistake in the subject and the form, and we wait to see what our Genius will vouchsafe to us in the autumn of life.

Much joy to Wallenstein ! I hope that when we come a part will be already visible. Meyer sends best greetings. May we find you and yours in excellent health. From the half of our way, from Frankfort or Nüremberg, you will hear once more from us.

Humboldt has written from Munich, and goes to Basle. Once more farewell, with the hope of soon meeting again.
G.

CCCLXXIV.

To our especial joy we have found Knebel here, and we shall therefore tarry somewhat longer than we intended. The town offers much that is interesting, old works of art, mechanic labors; there are likewise many observations to be made on political relations. I say to you, therefore, only a word of greeting, and send a poem. It is the fourth in honor of the handsome maid of the mills. The third is not yet ready; it will have the title, *Treason*, and will relate the history, how the young man was badly received in the mill. Soon I shall have the pleasure to embrace you again, and to ask your thoughts on a hundred things.

NUREMBERG, 10th November, 1797.

G.

CCCLXXV.

JENA, 22d November, 1797.

ONCE more I wish you joy on your happy arrival. How agreeable it is to me to be able again to communicate with you so easily and quickly! What you have brought with you, of things and ideas, promises me a Winter rich in entertainment and instruction, and doubly glad am I that I can pass a part of it near you. For the theatre we must try to do something, although no one but ourselves were to learn somewhat from the trial. Have you got a sight of Einsiedel's work thereupon? Here is one man more, at least, who strives to utter something on this matter, and, in a certain circle, will nourish an interest in it.

Here are the letters of Garve, which will display German nature to you in a different, though kindred, way from the letter of Raethselman.

The money, together with the Almanacs, the carrier-girl will take with her the day after to-morrow. Had I known that you wished to redeem the gold again, I would certainly not have taken it.

Farewell for to-day. More on Friday. Greetings to Meyer.

SCH.

CCCLXXVI.

THE four carolins* I send back, with thanks, and beg to have instead my golden Cail. I have, likewise, yet to thank for the amount of the Almanac, so soon made over through Cotta. The proverb, what is won through the flute is spent through the drum, I have verified in the better sense, inasmuch as I have for this amount bought a work of Art, that will give you pleasure too, and will elevate and animate our mutual enjoyments and acquirements. Meyer has already opened to you something of our latest speculations, and rejoices much in your participation and coöperation. So soon as I shall have rested a little, I will draw up our theses, in order then to confer thereupon, and to construct a successful whole. I am convinced that we shall make fine progress this Winter.

I sat yesterday, for the first time, in your box, and wish soon to conduct you into it again. As I looked at the representation altogether as a stranger, I was astonished to see how far our people really are! On a certain level road of nature and prose, they do their business well be-

* A gold coin.

yond measure ; but, alas ! the moment only a tincture merely of poetry shows itself, as, however, always happens where there is even the gentlest movement of the pathetic, they are instantly either null or false. It seemed extraordinary to me that the author of the piece, *Ziegler*, appears to be just in this condition ; he discovers right clever comic motives, and because these produce their effect extemporaneously, he handles them mostly very well ; but all tender, sentimental and pathetic situations, for which preparation must be made, and which are to have a result, he knows not how to treat, even when he has got hold of them ; they trip up one another, and produce no effect, although they are not badly planned. I promise myself from your presence much good for the Theatre and for yourself. I hope by the time of your arrival to be completely resettled.

For the *Horen* already sent, I give my best thanks, and now beg also for some copies of the Almanac. The enclosed letter is another genuine evidence of contracted Germanism.

Fare you well. We are by degrees unpacking our treasures, and arrangements are already made for showing them. By the time you come, everything will be in the finest order.

WEIMAR, 22d November, 1797.

G.

CCCLXXVII.

JENA, 24th November, 1797.

I HAVE never yet been so palpably convinced, as in my present occupation, how closely in Poetry substance and form are connected together. Since I have begun to transform my prosaic language into a poetic rhythmical one,

I find myself under a totally different jurisdiction than before ; even many motives, which in the prosaic execution seemed to be perfectly in place, I can now no longer use : they were merely good for the common domestic understanding, whose organ prose seems to be ; but verse absolutely requires references to the imagination, and thus I was obliged to become more poetical in many of my motives. Everything that ought to be elevated above the common, should really be conceived, at least in the beginning, in verse, for the flat shows itself nowhere so conspicuously as when it is uttered in metrical language.

In my present labors an observation has presented itself to me, which you, perhaps, also, have already made. It seems that a part of the poetic interest lies in the antagonism between the matter itself and the mode of setting it forth. Is the matter very poetically significant, then a somewhat meagre dress and a simplicity of diction amounting to commonness will very well become it ; whereas, on the contrary, an unpoetic common matter, such as it is often necessary to have in a large whole, acquires poetic dignity through an animated and rich diction. Where the matter is of this unpoetic character, then it is, I think, that the ornaments required by Aristotle must come in, for in a poetic work there should be nothing common.

In a dramatic production rhythm has this great and important effect, that, by treating all characters and all situations according to one law, and exhibiting them, in spite of their inward differences, in one form, it thereby forces the poet and his reader to require from all, however characteristically different, something universal and purely human. Everything has to unite in the generic idea of

the poetical, and rhythm is as well the representative as the instrument of this law, by which everything is embraced. In this way rhythm forms the atmosphere for poetic creation, the gross remains behind, only the spiritual can be carried by this thin element.

You here receive eight Almanacs. Properly, six on vellum were intended for you, but through some confusion it happened that my supply of handsome copies was all exhausted before I knew it. I send, therefore, two copies more, and this you, perhaps, prefer. The Duchess has received one from me, as also Privy-Counsellor Voigt, Herder, Boettiger.

Zelter wishes to know how you are satisfied with his Melodies to the Bajadere and the Song of Mignon. He writes that an Almanac won for him a bet of six bottles of champagne, for he maintained against some one, that it would certainly contain no *Xenia*.

Farewell, and provide that I soon receive something from your æsthetic treasures to read. Many greetings to Meyer.

SCH.

CCCLXXVIII.

WEIMAR, 24th November, 1797.

I SEND back the letters of Garve with thanks, and wish that the poor sick old man had abused us still more sharply, if thereby he could become healthy and happy for the rest of his life. On reading these pages, what a litany of most lamentable considerations present themselves, the recital of which I spare you, because they will all have occurred to yourself. In this good and valiant man, you cannot discover a trace of æsthetic feeling. From one

side his judgments are grossly material, and from the other, he handles the matter like a master of ceremonies, in order to be very particular in assigning to subordinate talents their little place. It is only well that you have again conciliated him with three words.

How natural such judges of morals find it, that an author should, during his whole life, let his best endeavors be mistaken, himself retarded, teased, vexed, and worried, because forsooth it is so established! And therewith he ought to be patient, mindful of his high worth, and stand there with his hands crossed over each other, like an *ecce homo*, merely in order that Mr. —, and his like, may also pass for poets in their way.

But enough of such pitiful matters! Let us push forward on our way, ever steadfastly and vigorously.

G.

CCCLXXIX.

25th November.

FOR letter and package, which I have this moment received, I thank you cordially, and only say in haste and impromptu, that I am not only of your opinion, but even go much further. Whatever is poetical should be treated rhythmically. That is my conviction, and the belief, that by degrees a poetical prose might be introduced, only shows that the difference between prose and poetry is entirely lost sight of. It is no better than if some one should order to be made in his park a lake that could be drained, and the landscape-gardener endeavored to execute the order by forming a marsh. What is neither one thing nor the other, is for amateurs and dabblers, just as marshes are for amphibious animals. In the meanwhile the evil

has become so great in Germany, that no one any longer sees it ; nay, like that scrofulous people that is told of, they rather look upon a healthily made neck as a punishment from God. All dramatic works (and perhaps comedy and farce generally) should be rhythmical, and we should then sooner see who could do something. For the present, however, nothing is left to the dramatic poet but to accommodate himself to public taste ; and in this sense, you could not be blamed if you chose to write your *Wallenstein* in prose ; do you however regard it as an self-dependent work, then it must necessarily become rhythmical.

At all events, we are obliged to forget our age, if we wish to work according to our convictions : for, such a shallow vulgarity in principles as at present prevails has assuredly never yet been in the world, and what good the new philosophy will do, we have yet to wait for.

Poetry is in strictness founded on the exhibition of the empiric pathological condition of man ; but who among our admirable judges and so-called poets at present acknowledges this ? Has a man like Garve, who, however, pretends to have been thinking all his life, and passed for a kind of philosopher, even the feeblest glimmering of such an axiom ? Does he not, therefore, hold you to be a meritorious poet because you amused yourself with uttering the judgments of Reason with a poetic mouth ? the which is to be allowed, but not to be praised. How willingly would I permit these prosaic natures to start back with horror from the so-called immoral subjects, if they had a feeling for the higher poetic moral, for example, in the *Polycrates* and *Ibycus*, and were thereby delighted.

Let us, particularly as Meyer has brought with him out

of Italy a grim rigorism, grow ever severer in principles, and more sure and pleasing in execution. The latter can only happen by fixing our looks while at work only within the frame.

Herewith my Elegy, with the wish for a friendly reception.

To Zelter we remain debtors six bottles of champagne for the firm, good conviction he had of us. His Indian Legend I esteem highly. The thought is original and happy; the song of Mignon I have not yet even heard. Composers play only their own things, and amateurs have likewise only particularly favored pieces. On my whole route I found no one who would have been disposed to master, by study, something foreign and new.

I beg you to let me have some copies of the melodies to the Almanac; they are wanting to all those sent to me.

May you be very successful with your Wallenstein, in order that we may the sooner see you with us.

A hearty farewell and greeting to your family.

G.

CCCLXXX.

IN the package sent I have found the song-melodies to the Almanac, for which I give you thanks; but there is no letter, which though at the end and in the middle of the week comes to me always so wished for. But I also have little to communicate, inasmuch as for the last few days I have lived only in the world, and have neither thought nor done anything that would have for us both a common interest. We are still busied in setting up the things of Art we brought with us, and I think all will be in the best condition before you come over here.

I wish much to hear how your rhythmical Wallenstein thrives. For myself I am just now in such a state, as if I had never made or should make a poem. It is best that the mood for poetry comes unexpected and uncalled.

Fare you right well, and let me soon hear something of you, your condition and labors.

WEIMAR, 28th November, 1797.

G.

CCCLXXXI.

JENA, 28th November, 1797.

WITH your Elegy you have again given us great pleasure; it belongs so truly to the pure poetic species, as through so simple a means, through a sportful use of the subject, it stirs up the deepest and points to the highest.

May many such moods cheer you in these gloomy, oppressive days, which to you also I know are so fatal! I need all my elasticity, in order to make myself air and room against the down-weighting heavens.

I read lately the Shakspearian pieces which treat of the War of the Two Roses, and am now, after finishing Richard III., filled with amazement. This last is one of the sublimest tragedies that I know, and at this moment I could not say whether even any other one of Shakspeare can rank before it. The great destinies, woven in the preceding pieces, are ended in this in a truly great manner, and they connect themselves together according to the most sublime idea. That the subject of itself excludes entirely the tender, the melting, the tear-moving, assists this high effect; everything therein is energetic and great—naught common disturbs the pure æsthetic emotion, and it is, as it were, the pure form of the dread tragic that one enjoys. A high Nemesis stalks through the piece, in all the figures;

one loses not this sensation from the beginning to the end. It is wonderful how the Poet was always able to win a poetic booty from the unwieldy material, and how skilfully he represents that which cannot be distinctly represented. I mean his art in employing symbols where the real thing cannot be displayed. No Shakspearian piece has reminded me so much of the Greek tragedy.

It were verily worth while to prepare this series of eight pieces for the stage, with all the judgment that can now be exercised in such a matter. An epoch might be thereby introduced. We really must confer thereon.

Fare you well with our friend Meyer. My Wallenstein gains daily more shape, and I am well satisfied with myself.

SCH.

CCCLXXXII.

As you say so much good of my Elegy, I am the more sorry that I have not for a long while been in a similar mood. That poem was made on my entrance into Switzerland, since which time my active productive *I* has been put under restraint in so many agreeable and disagreeable ways, that it has not yet been able to gather itself up: we must now therefore wait in all humility.

I wish much that you might be allowed to work up the Shakspearian productions. When you shall have got yourself in practice by the writing of Wallenstein, such an undertaking would not be difficult for you.

Farewell. The season exercises its rights on me, and as this time I can communicate to you nothing cheerful out of my own powers, I send you a *ish ode, which will not fail of its effect.

WEIMAR, 29th November, 1797.

G.

CCCLXXXIII.

JENA, 1st December, 1797.

DON'T quarrel with me because the Comedy you asked for does not come with this to-day ; it was only late in the evening by candlelight that it occurred to me to look for it, and that I did for half an hour ineffectually. I will send it by the post on Sunday.

It is getting to be quite a trouble to me how the *Wallenstein* swells in bulk, particularly now that the Iambics, although they shorten the expression, entertain a poetic disposition which drives one into diffuseness. You will judge whether I should and could be shorter. My first Act is so large that I could put the first three Acts of your *Iphigenia* into it without entirely filling it up ; it is true, the after Acts are much shorter. The exposition requires extensiveness, just as the advancing action leads to intensiveness. It seems as if a certain epic spirit had come over me, which may be accounted for by the power of your direct influences ; yet I don't believe that it hurts the dramatic spirit, because it was perhaps the only means of giving a poetic nature to this prosaic subject.

I begged Meyer lately to procure for me a drawing of you for the next Almanac. We want to do this early, so that the engraving may be made with good leisure. I should also like to have from him a Nemesis for my *Wallenstein* ; it is an interesting and significant illustration. Meyer will think of one that has a tragic character ; I wish to have it as vignette on the title-page itself.

Can I not soon hope for something for the *Horen* from you ? In these gloomy December days, one can do nothing better than make money to spend in fine weather. Have you no inclination to finish now the chorus ? or is

there, perhaps, to be found some other material that could be more quickly got ready? I am very poor, and yet time will not stand still.

Fare you well, and enjoy with Meyer your treasures of Art, about which I am very curious, and which will give us occasion for specific judgments in Art, which I so much need. My wife's best greetings.

SCH.

CCCLXXXIV.

FOR us, practically as well as theoretically, it will be of the greatest importance what issue your Wallenstein shall have. Will not the subject yet force you in the end to get up a cycle of pieces? That rhythm allures you into breadth is perfectly natural, for every poetic mood is flexible and accommodating. I am very desirous to hear something of it.

I will speak with Meyer about the engravings for the Almanac and Wallenstein. I haven't much confidence in a portrait; it is difficult to produce anything that shall be only tolerable, and more especially of this small size, and engravers treat whatever belongs to a book so lightly and carelessly. Were it not better to abide by the general and the symbolical?

I myself, since my return, have scarcely been able to attain to a mood for even dictating a tolerable letter. The mass of objects that I have taken up is very great, and the interest in writing out and working up has been very much weakened by intercourse with Meyer. So soon as I have once talked a thing thoroughly over, it is for me the same as finished for a long time.

I must only once more put in order the old and new

that lies in my intellect and heart ; I would very willingly send you something for the *Horen* ; it will soon appear what I can furnish.

Fare you right well, and gladden us soon with your arrival, and greet heartily your dear wife.

WEIMAR, 2d December, 1797.

G.

CCCLXXXV.

JENA, 5th December, 1797.

I CAN only write you a greeting this gloomy day. The weather weighs upon me exceedingly, and stirs up all my pains, so that even work doesn't gladden me.

After mature deliberation, I have determined that I shall do better to pass the two worst Winter months here. January and February are dangerous months for me, because in them I have already been attacked twice with inflammation of the lungs. The slightest cold can, during this period, bring on this malady, which I should not now, as formerly, be able to withstand. With such a tendency a change of habits is not to be ventured on, and in Weimar I should not dare to think of going out in Winter. But as the bespoken lodgings are very small, and could scarcely hold the children, I should have but a sorry existence. Moreover, the next two months are decisive for my labors, and therefore nothing must press upon me from without.

Some months later I will seek out lodgings near you ; the weather will then be milder, I shall be able to go across the street, and everything will be easier to me.

Perhaps I will come over some fine December day on a visit, and after New Year, we shall be able, I hope, to have you and Meyer here.

From Zumsteg in Stuttgart I received lately a letter, which really gave me pleasure. He writes which of our poems in the Almanac pleases him most, and—what for a long time we have not been accustomed to hear—he has really discovered what is best. He also writes that in his region the Almanac makes a universal sensation.

Farewell. I am to-day not in a condition to say anything.

SCH.

CCCLXXXVI.

IF you are convinced that a Winter residence in Jena is more advantageous for your health and your labors, I shall be glad of it, as I shall find myself obliged to go over there after New Year, in order, in some measure, to gather myself up, and how strange Jena would seem to me if I found you not there. I now rejoice at your remaining, as, in case I had been obliged to leave you here, I should have been only divided against myself.

By all means stick to your Wallenstein; I shall soon go at my Faust, partly to be rid of this mongrel, partly to prepare myself for a higher and purer mood, perhaps for Tell. At the same time I shall occasionally think of the next Almanac; perhaps, too, something may be dropt for the *Horen*.

Let us continue resolutely in the path we have entered on. We cannot fail to achieve much yet, and Meyer's co-operation will greatly further us. We can also be certain of the sympathy of the public; for although one always complains of it as a whole, it nevertheless contains many cultivated individuals, who know how to appreciate the honest and earnest endeavors of an author. Meanwhile,

let the old *laudator temporis acti* grieve amidst "these dregs of the eighteenth century" (see the November number of the German *Mercury*, page 194); as much clear wine as we need the Muse will not fail to pour out for us. To see Meyer's beautiful things, were well worth a December ride. May your health allow it.

WEIMAR, 6th December, 1797.

G.

CCCLXXXVII.

JENA, 8th December, 1797.

I AM now perfectly reconciled to the necessity which detains me here for the coming months, as the journey to Weimar would not have been the way for me to be oftener with you, and so let us with thankfulness begin again next month our old life, which will not lose by Meyer's presence. It is not at all bad that between your first and second epochs, you shove in Faust. You thereby swell the poetic stream, and excite in yourself an impatient desire for the new fresh production, which is of itself half the mood. Faust, when you shall have worked through him, will certainly not leave you as he found you; he will exercise and sharpen new faculties in you, and thus you will come richer and more full of fire to your new work.

I will keep at Wallenstein as much as I can, but the pathological interest of Nature in a poetic work of this kind is very weakening to me. Fortunately, my indisposition does not affect my mood; but, owing to it, a cordial immersion in my work exhausts me the quicker, and puts me out of order. Commonly, therefore, I have to pay for one day of propitious mood with five or six days of oppression and suffering. This keeps me back astonishing-

ly, as you can well conceive. Still I do not give up the hope of seeing Wallenstein played next Summer in Weimar, and of being next Autumn deeply merged in my Knights of Malta.

These occupy me now occasionally, when I am resting from work. There is something very attractive for me in such subjects, which, by their nature, isolate themselves and make a world for themselves. I have made good use of this circumstance in Wallenstein; and in the Knights of Malta it will favor me still more. Not only that this Order is really an individual altogether *sui generis*, but in the moment of dramatic action it is so still more. All communication with the rest of the world is cut off by the blockade; it is concentrated solely upon itself, upon the care of its existence, and only the qualities that make it the Order which it is, can at this moment effect its preservation.

This piece will have to be treated as simply as Wallenstein is complicated, and I rejoice beforehand that in the simple subject I shall find all that I want, and shall use all that I find significant. I can execute it entirely in the Grecian form, and according to the plan of Aristotle, with choruses, and without the division into Acts. Can you tell me where the division into Acts originated? In Aristotle, we found nothing of it; and in many Grecian pieces it would not be at all applicable.

Körner writes me that Gessler is again in Dresden. His Italian he has left, they say, in Switzerland, in order further to form her there. It is to be hoped that she will in the meantime run away with some one else.

From Humboldt, I have heard nothing for six weeks, and from this I conclude that he has really gone to Paris :

for, were he quietly settled in Switzerland, mere ennui would have made him write.

Fare you well, and get through yet happily the remainder of this month. With me, all are just now well. My wife sends your best greetings. I shall have great pleasure in showing to our old friend Meyer something of Wallenstein.

SCH.

CCCLXXXVIII.

THE information that you will not come to us this Winter, has grieved our actors. It appears that they purposed to do themselves honor before you. I have consoled them with the hope that you would visit us in the Spring. Our Theatre stands in need of such a new stimulus, which I myself cannot give it. Between him who has to command, and him who shall give to such an establishment æsthetic guidance, there is a very great difference. The latter must act upon the feelings, and must therefore show feeling; the former must close up all his avenues of sensibility in order to keep tight together the political and economical form. Whether it is possible to combine free reciprocal influence and mechanical direction, I know not; with me, at least, such a feat has not yet been successful.

I can very well understand the state in which your work puts you. Without a lively pathological interest, neither could I ever succeed in working up a tragic situation, and I have therefore rather avoided than sought it. May it not have been one of the advantages of the ancients, that the highest pathos was with them only an æsthetic play, while with us hearty sincerity must coöperate in order to produce such a work? I do not, indeed, sufficiently

know myself, to judge whether I could write a genuine tragedy; I am terrified at the mere thought of such an undertaking, and am almost convinced that through the mere attempt I could destroy myself.

I have still a fortnight's work before me in order to get several things under way, to bring the new contracts for the theatre into order, and much else. But, after that, I will hasten to my day-solitudes in the Jena palace, and to our evening talks.

Meyer, I shall not bring with me, for I have again renewed the experience, that I can only work in an absolute loneliness, and that not merely conversation, but even the presence in the house of beloved and esteemed persons, draws off entirely my poetic springs. I should now be in a kind of despair, because every trace of a productive excitement in me has disappeared, if I were not certain of finding it again during the first eight days in Jena.

I send herewith a volume of poems by a man, who perhaps would already have come to something, if he did not live in Nüremberg, and knew how to find the kind of poetry for which he has talent. There seems to me to be a good deal of humorous merit in it, although there are many defects. As you like to indulge in hope about young men, and can make use of all kinds of contributions, it depends on you whether relations shall be opened with him, and encouragement given to him.

Fare you right well. Greet your dear wife.

Gessler risks much by leaving the beauty to herself. I am sorry that we did not meet him. Meyer knows the lady. For the rest, there are many other strange comets abroad in the Heaven of Love and Hymen; what they betoken and bring is uncertain.

I enclose, likewise, a short historical Essay; tell me your opinion of it, and in how far one can recommend a small collection of similar works to a publisher.

Once more farewell.

WEIMAR, 9th December, 1797.

G.

CCCLXXXIX.

JENA, 12th December, 1797.

As I just now have the love-scenes in the second Act of Wallenstein before me, I cannot think without heart-ache of the stage and the theatrical destination of the piece. For the arrangement of the whole requires that love shall—not so much through action, as rather through its calm self-subsistence, and its freedom from all aims—put itself in opposition to the remaining action, which is a restless organized striving after an end, and thereby completes a certain human circle. But, in this quality, it is not adapted to the stage, at least not in the sense that would be practicable with our means of representation and our public. In order, therefore, to preserve poetic freedom, I must banish from my mind all thought of scenic representation.

Should it really be that tragedy, on account of its pathetic power, does not accord with your nature? In all your poetic creations, I find the entire tragic power and depth, such as would suffice for a complete tragedy; in Wilhelm Meister there is, as far as regards feeling, more than one tragedy. I believe that merely the severe straight line, according to which the tragic poet must proceed, does not suit your nature, which always likes to express itself with a freer play of mind. Then, I believe, also, a certain reference to the spectator, with which the tragic poet cannot

dispense, the aim to produce an effect, the outward impression, which with this species of poetry must not be entirely overlooked, hems you in disagreeably, and perhaps you are the less adapted for a tragic poet on this very account, that you are so entirely formed for a poet in the generic significance of the word. At least, I find in you all the poetic qualities of the tragic poet in the richest measure, and if, notwithstanding, it be true that you cannot write a perfectly genuine tragedy, the cause must lie in the un-poetic requisitions.

Have the goodness to take an opportunity of enclosing to me some play-bills, on which are all the actors.

Your idea of uniting the three libraries in one whole, every reasonable person in Jena and Weimar will assuredly wish carried into effect.

* * * * *

Einsiedel's work on the theatre contains many good opinions. It is diverting to me how Dilettanti of this kind express themselves on certain things, which can only be drawn out of the depth of science and contemplation, as for example, what he says about style and manner, &c.

Fare you right well. Heartily do I rejoice at the prospect of our evenings. My wife is very curious about the Comets that are circling through the Heaven of Love and Hymen. Greet Meyer.

SCH.

CCCXC.

THE new works of Art in our house bring us to-day an early visit of ladies; on this account, only so much in haste.

A description of the capabilities of our actors I will myself make for you in a few days, with particular reference

to your piece, of the demands of which I have a general notion.

For the rest, do you only go on without anxiety. The inward unity that Wallenstein will have must be felt, and you have great privileges on the stage. An ideal whole makes an imposing impression on people, even though they are not capable of deciphering it in detail, nor of appreciating the merit of the individual parts.

From a singular cause I am required to reflect upon the German Theatre in general, and as I am often obliged to sit in the play-house against my will, I try to turn this sacrifice to some account.

Fare you right well; I rejoice that the time approaches which will bestow on me a collected existence and your neighborhood.

WEIMAR, 13th December, 1797.

G

CCCXCI.

JENA, 15th December, 1797.

OUR Poetess Mereau is with me, and so for to-day I can only write a few words.

Of the Historical Essay, which I here send back, and of others of the same stamp, there is not much to be made. It is far too dry and barren, and in spite of the useless parade with authorities and historic reading, contains nothing new of the slightest importance that could throw light upon the event or even make it more interesting. If, however, the intention is merely to earn something with it, this will be sooner attained by insertion in journals like the Mercury and others, than by making a separate collection.

I have already often wished, that among the many literary speculations of men who are capable of no other work than that of compilation, some one would fall upon the idea of hunting up poetic subjects in old books, and should possess, at the same time, a certain tact, to discover the *punctum saliens* in a story of no apparent interest. I have never access to such sources, and my poverty in such subjects makes me really more unfruitful in producing than I otherwise should be. It seems to me that a certain Hyginus, a Greek, once collected a number of tragic fables, either out of the poets or for their use. A friend like this I could make good use of. A wealth in materials for possible use really augments one's inward wealth; nay, more, it exercises an important power; and it is of itself of great use to put life into a subject, if only in thought, and to try one's self thereon.

Elisa von der Recke has sent me a play of her own invention and execution, with plenipotentiary right to alter and to erase. I will see whether I can use it for the *Horen*; it is, as you can easily imagine, of a very moral character, and so I hope it may slip through. I must provide in every way for the *Horen*. And that such moral people surrender themselves at discretion to us heretics and free thinkers, particularly after the so crying misdemeanor with the *Xenia*, is always a certain satisfaction.

Humboldt has again let us hear nothing from him for six weeks. I conclude from this that he has at last gone to Paris.

Farewell for to-day. My wife sends best greetings.

SCH.

CCCXCII.

HERE I send you Hyginus, and I would at the same time advise you to procure the *Adagia* of Erasmus, which are easily to be had. As the ancient sayings rest mostly on geographical, historical, national, and individual relations, they contain a great treasure of material substance. Unhappily we know from experience, that no one can seek a poet's subjects for him; nay, that he himself often makes mistakes.

The *Horen* have now, as it seems, their female period; 't will be well if they only thereby maintain their literary life.

I am just now fit neither for large things nor small, and am only reading meanwhile, in order to keep with the good, Herodotus and Thucydides, in which for the first time I have a perfectly pure pleasure, because I read them only on account of their form and not their contents.

My greatest wish now is to be soon with you and to feel once more the approach of the Sun; in the meantime I make as good use as possible of the gloomy and bad days. Fare you right well, and do you the like.

WEIMAR, 16th December, 1797.

G.

CCCXCIII.

I WISH and hope that the present letter may find you again in a tolerable state of health, and I thank your dear wife for her letter, which gave me an especial pleasure through the transmission of the vigorous marrowy natural products.

Your letter of the second of October, together with the

Almanac, has also come back again, and there is therefore wanting nothing more in our reciprocal correspondence.

Since the appearance of Schlegel's review of my Herrmann, I have again thought over the laws of the *Epopée* and the Drama, and think I am in a good path. The difficulty in these theoretical endeavors is always to free the different species of poetry from everything accidental. You will at an early day receive a small treatise thereon, and I will not therefore say anything beforehand.

Meyer knows very well the author of the *Elegies* in the Almanac, and will himself one day give you an account of him; he is a sculptor by vocation. I long for nothing now so much as for your *Wallenstein*.

Do recover soon again from your illness. Would that I could spend with you these days which promise to be so cheerful!

WEIMAR, 20th December, 1797.

G.

CCCXCIV.

JENA, 22d December, 1797.

My bad attack passed off quickly and happily, but it has weakened and untuned me for the whole week, so that I cannot even think of anything poetic. To this, too, comes the bad weather, to make all activity stagnate within me.

Schlegel's review of your *Herrmann* I have not yet seen, and know not by which Schlegel it is. Be it, however, by which one it will, neither is fully equal to doing it; for to appreciate this poem there is required especially a refined sensibility, and in this both are deficient, although they assume to themselves the terminology thereof.

Your treatise occasioned thereby I await with eagerness; or will you not soon bring it yourself?

We should like very much to know how soon we may count upon your arrival. It will now soon be a half year that we have not lived together.

I beg you to greet Meyer for me. I am very sorry to be so long without seeing his works.

Fare you right well.

SCH.

CCCXCV.

ON EPIC AND DRAMATIC POETRY

BY

GOETHE AND SCHILLER.*

THE Epic and Dramatic poet are both subject to universal laws, especially to the law of unity and the law of development; further, they both treat of similar subjects, and both may use all kinds of motives;† the great essential difference between them consists therein, that the Epic poet presents the event as *perfectly past*, and the Dramatic represents it as *perfectly present*. If any one should wish to derive from the nature of man the detail of the laws according to which both are to proceed, he must figure to himself a rhapsodist and a mimic, the former surrounded

* Goethe unites Schiller's name with his own, because the opinions here set forth by him were chiefly the result of their discussion of the subject in letters and conversation.

† By motives, *motiven* in German, are here meant the sources of action in a poetic work.

with his quiet listening circle, the latter with his impatient gazing and hearing circle, and it would not be difficult to unfold what profits most each of those two kinds of poetry, what subjects each will in preference choose, of what motives it will in preference avail itself; I say in preference, for, as I already in the beginning remarked, neither can exclusively assume anything to itself.

The subjects of the Epos and of Tragedy should be purely human, important and pathetic; the personages stand best on a certain grade of civilisation, where the inward activity is still directed solely on itself, where one does not exert influence morally, politically, mechanically, but personally. The traditions out of the heroic times of the Greeks were in this sense particularly favorable to the poets.

The Epic poem exhibits particularly personally restricted activity; Tragedy, personally restricted suffering. The Epic poem represents man *acting out of himself*,—battles, travels, every kind of undertaking that requires a certain physical breadth: Tragedy, man *led inward*; and the actions of genuine Tragedy need therefore very little room.

Of motives, I know five kinds:

1. *Forward striding*, which further the action; of these the Drama chiefly avails itself.

2. *Backward striding*, which carry the action away from its aim; of these the Epic poem avails itself almost exclusively.

3. *Retarding*, which arrest the progress, or lengthen the road; of these, both species avail themselves with the greatest advantage.

4. *Back grasping*, through which that which happened before the epoch of the poem, is taken up into it.

5. *Forward grasping*, which anticipate that which will happen after the epoch of the poem ; both the Epic and Dramatic poet use these two kinds, to make their poems complete.

The *worlds*, that are to be brought to view, are common to both.

1. The *physical*, and first that which is nearest, to which the represented personages belong and which surrounds them ; in this the Dramatic poet stands for the most part fixed on one point—the Epic moves more freely in a larger space. Secondly, the more remote physical world, in which I embrace entire Nature ; this the Epic poet, who in general appeals to the imagination, brings nearer through similes, which the Dramatic uses more sparingly.

2. The *moral* world is entirely common to both, and is most advantageously exhibited in its physiological and pathological simplicity.

3. The world of *phantasies, bodings, apparitions, accidents, and fatalities*. This is open to both, only it is to be understood, that it be brought in contact with the world of sense ; and here arises for the moderns a particular difficulty, because, however much it were to be desired, we do not easily find a substitute for the prodigies, gods, prophets and oracles of the ancients.

As regards the treatment on the whole, the Rhapsodist, who holds up to us the perfectly past, will appear as a wise man, who, in calm thoughtfulness, surveys what has happened ; his discourse will aim to calm his auditors in order that they may listen to him with contentment and long ; he will apportion the interest equally, because it is not in his power quickly to balance a too lively impression ; he will grasp or go backwards or forwards at plea-

sure ; he will be followed throughout, for he has only to do with the faculty of imagination, which itself produces its images, and to which, up to a certain degree, it is indifferent what kind it calls up. The Rhapsodist should not himself appear as a higher being in his poem ; it would be much the best that he read behind a curtain, so that there would be a total abstraction from personality, and it would seem as though one heard only the voice of the Muses.

The Mimic, on the other hand, is precisely in the opposite case ; he presents himself as a definite individual, he wishes that we take an interest exclusively in him and what is immediately round him, that we feel with him the sufferings of his body and his soul, share his embarrassments and forget ourselves in him. It is true, that he will go to work by degrees, but he can venture upon much more lively strokes, because, with sensuous presence, even the stronger impression may be effaced by a weaker one. The gazing listener must necessarily remain with his senses constantly on the stretch, he cannot lift himself up to reflection, he must follow with his passions, his imagination is silenced, no demands can be made on it, and even what is narrated must as it were be brought visibly before us.

Inclosed you receive my Essay, which I beg you to weigh, to apply, to modify, and to enlarge. I have for a few days past made use of these criteria in reading the *Iliad* and *Sophocles*, as well as on some epic and tragic subjects, which I endeavored in thought to organize, and they appeared to me very available, nay decisive.

On this occasion it occurred to me how it happens, that

we moderns are so inclined to mix the different kinds of poetry together, nay, that we are not at all capable of distinguishing them one from another. It seems to me to proceed from this, that artists, who ought to produce works of Art within their pure conditions, complacently yield to that striving of spectators and hearers to find everything perfectly true. Meyer has remarked that there has been an attempt to force all kinds of plastic art up to painting, because this can, through keeping and color, present the imitation as perfectly true. So also in the progress of poetry, one sees that everything runs with the dramatic, into the exhibition of the *perfectly present*. So are novels in letters fully romantic; thence formal dialogues may properly be introduced, as Richardson has done; on the other hand, narrative novels with dialogues intermixed, would be censurable.

You will have heard a hundred times, that people, after reading a good novel, have wished to see the subject on the stage, and how many bad plays have thence arisen! Just so they wish to see every interesting situation in a novel at once engraved, in order that, to their imagination, no kind of activity be left; thus everything must be brought before the senses, be perfectly present, be dramatic, and the dramatic itself must put itself fully by the side of the really true. Now, these thoroughly childish, barbaric, tasteless tendencies the artist should oppose with all his might, should separate work from work with impassable magic circles, keep each one to its quality and its peculiarities, as the ancients did, and thereby became and were such artists. But who can separate his ship from the waves on which it swims? Against wind and current one makes little head-way.

Thus, for example, among the ancients, bas-relief was only a slightly raised work, a flat tasteful indication of a subject on a flat surface ; but people could not keep to that, it was half raised, wholly raised, limbs were separated from the surface, figures were separated, perspective introduced, streets, clouds, mountains, and landscapes represented ; and because this took place through men of talent, what was thoroughly inadmissible found admission the sooner, as, by the very talent applied, it was adapted the more completely to the minds of the uncultivated. So in Meyer's treatise, is related the story, which is well in its place here, how in Florence the figures made of clay were first glazed, then painted with one color, and finally with several, and enamelled.

To come back, now, to my Essay, I have applied the scale therein proposed, to my Herrmann and Dorothea, and beg you to do the same, whereby I have made very interesting observations ; as, for example,

1. That no exclusively epic motive, that is, none that retrogrades, is found therein, but that only the four others, which the Epic poem has in common with the Drama, are made use of.

2. That it represents not men acting out of themselves, but men led inward, and thereby also is removed from the Epopee, and approaches the Drama.

3. That it abstains from similitudes with reason, because, to a more moral subject, the intrusion of images from physical nature would be burthensome.

4. That out of the third world, although this is extraordinary, it has received quite enough influence, inasmuch as the great world-destiny is interwoven, in part really, and in part through persons symbolically, and of bodement, of

connection between a visible and invisible world, gentle indications are also given, which, together, according to my conviction, stand in the place of the ancient figures of gods, whose physical poetical power is indeed not thereby supplied.

In conclusion I must further announce to you a strange task that I have given myself in reference to this matter, namely, to investigate whether between Hector's death and the departure of the Greeks from the Trojan coast, there does or does not lie another Epic poem? I almost presume the latter, and that for the following reasons:

1. Because there is found nothing retrogressive, but everything strides irresistibly forward.

2. Because all the events that are in some measure retarding divide the interest among several persons, and although in a great mass, yet not unlike private destinies. The *Death of Achilles* seems to me a noble tragic subject; the death of Ajax, the return of Philoctetes, have come down to us from the ancients. Polyxena, Hecuba, and other subjects out of this epoch, were also treated. The conquest of Troy itself is, as the moment of fulfilment of a great destiny, neither epic nor tragic, and in a genuine epic treatment can only be seen forwards or backwards in the distance. Virgil's rhetorical sentimental treatment cannot here come into view.

So much of what I at present discern, *salvo meliori*; for, if I mistake not, this subject is, like many others, theoretically inexpressible. What Genius has produced, we at any rate see; who will say what it could and should produce?

G.

CCCXCVI.

THE contraposition of the Rhapsodist and Mimic, together with their respective auditories, seems to me a very happily chosen means to get at the difference of the two kinds of poetry. This method alone would be sufficient to render impossible a gross mistake in the choice of the subject for the kind of poetry, or of the kind of poetry for the subject. Experience also confirms it; for I know of nothing that would hold one, who was working out a drama, so strictly within the limits of the poetic species, and in case one should overstep them, would so surely bring him back, as the liveliest possible figuring to himself of the real representation on the boards of a thronged and promiscuous house, whereby is brought so home to one the unquiet expectation, and consequently the law of intense restless forward-striding and movement.

I would propose a second expedient for bringing to view this difference. The dramatic action moves itself before me, around the epic I move, and it appears as it were to stand still. According to my opinion, there is much in this difference. If the event keeps itself in motion before me, I am strictly chained to the present, my fancy loses all freedom, there arises and continues an incessant unrest in me, I must always stick to the object, all looking back, all reflection is denied to me, because I obey a foreign power. If I move round the event, which cannot escape me, I can then go at an irregular gait, I can tarry a longer or a shorter time, according to my subjective need, I can make steps backward or forward, &c. This accords also very well with the idea of the *past*, which can be conceived as standing still, and with the idea of *narration*; for the narrator knows already in the

beginning and in the middle the end, and to him consequently each movement of the active is of equal import, and thus he maintains throughout a calm freedom.

That the Epic poet has to treat his event as perfectly past, the Tragic his as perfectly present, is very clear to me.

I will further add : there grows out of this an exciting conflict of Poetry as Genus with its Species, which, in Nature as in Art, is very animated. Poetry, as such, makes everything sensuously present, and so it obliges the Epic poet likewise to make present what is past, only that the character of this past must not be defaced. Poetry, as such, makes all that is present past, and removes to a distance all that is near (through Ideality), and thus it obliges the Dramatic poet to keep far removed individual reality which always tends to force itself upon us, and to impart to the mind a poetic freedom against the subject. Tragedy, therefore, in its highest idea, will always strive upwards to the Epic character, and only thereby attains to being poetry. The Epic poem will just so strive downwards to the Drama, and only thereby perfectly fulfil the idea of poetic genus ; just that which makes both to be poetic works, brings both near to one another. The token by which they are specified and opposed to one another, always brings one of the two constituent parts of the poetic generic idea into danger ; with the Epopee *Sensuousness*, with Tragedy *Freedom* ; and it is therefore natural, that the *contrepoids* against this defect will always be a quality which constitutes the specific token of the opposite species. Each, therefore, will do the other the service of taking the *Genus* under its protection against the *Species*. That this reciprocal tendency to-

wards each other shall not degenerate into a mingling and confounding of boundaries, that is just the proper duty of Art, whose brightest point in general is always this, to unite character with beauty, purity, and fullness, unity with universality.

Your Herrmann has really a certain inclination to Tragedy, if you place it by the side of the pure severe idea of the Epopee. The heart is occupied more warmly and earnestly ; there is therein more pathological interest than poetic indifference. So also do the narrowness of the *locale*, the fewness of the figures, the short range of the action belong to Tragedy. On the other hand, your Iphigenia evidently strikes into the Epic field, so soon as you hold up to it the strict idea of Tragedy. Of Tasso, I will not speak at all. For Tragedy, there is in Iphigenia a too tranquil progress, a too great tarrying by the way, not to consider the catastrophe, which contradicts Tragedy. The effect of this piece, as I have experienced it, partly on myself, partly on others, is generic, poetic and tragic ; and so it always will be when a Tragedy, in the Epic style, misses its end. But, in your Iphigenia, this approximation to the Epic is a fault, according to my idea ; in your Herrmann the inclination to Tragedy is obviously no fault, at least in the effect not at all so. Does this perhaps proceed thence, that Tragedy is designed for a *definite* use, the Epic poem for a universal and free one ?

For to-day nothing more. I am still unfit for any regular work, only your letter and treatise have been able in the meanwhile to give me occupation. Farewell.

SCH.

CCCXCVII.

SORRY as I am to hear that you have not yet recovered all your activity, it is, nevertheless, agreeable to me that my letter and treatise have, in some measure, occupied you. I thank you for yours, which carries still further a matter which must be so important to us. Unhappily we moderns are also occasionally born poets, and we fret ourselves round through the Genus of Poetry, without rightly knowing what we should be at; for the specific indications, if I mistake not, should come from without, and the occasion give direction to the talent. Why do we so seldom make an epigram in the Grecian sense? Because we see so few things that deserve one. Why are we so successful with the epic? Because we have no listeners. And why is the striving after theatrical works so great? Because, with us, the drama is the only attractive kind of poetry that addresses itself to the senses, from whose practice one can hope for a certain present enjoyment.

I have continued these past days to study the Iliad, in order to consider whether, between it and the Odyssey, there lie not another epopee. I find, however, only tragic subjects, either that such is really the case, or that I only cannot find the epic one. The Death of Achilles, with its accompaniments, would admit of an epic treatment, and, in a certain measure, would require it, on account of the breadth of the material to be worked up. Now would arise the question, whether one would do well likewise to treat a tragic subject epically? Much may be said for and against it. As regards the effect, a modern, who works for moderns, would always find advantage in it, because without pathological interest one will hardly obtain the approbation of the age. So much for this time.

Meyer is working diligently at his treatise on subjects suitable for the plastic Arts ; everything that interests us comes up for consideration, and it is shown how closely related the plastic artist is to the dramatist.

27th December, 1797.

G.

CCCXCVII. (a)

JENA, 29th December, 1797.

OUR friend Humboldt, from whom I here enclose to you a long letter, remains in transformed Paris, true to his old Germanism, and seems to have changed nothing but his outward environment. With a certain way of philosophizing and of feeling, it is as with a certain religion ; it cuts off from without and isolates, at the same time that from within it increases the heartiness.

Your present occupation, to separate and to purify the two kinds, is, indeed, of the highest importance, but with me you will be convinced, that to exclude from a work of art all that is foreign to its kind, one should also necessarily be able to include everything that is suitable to the kind. But it is just this that is now wanting. Because we cannot bring the conditions together under which each of the two kinds stand, we are obliged to confound them. Were there rhapsodists and a world for them, the epic would then not need to borrow motives from the tragic, and had we the aids and intensive powers of the Greek tragedy, and therewith the privilege to lead our hearers through a series of seven representations, we should not then need to extend our dramas to an unreasonable length. The capacity of feeling in the spectator and hearer must be filled, and be touched in all the points of its

periphery; the diameter of this capacity is the measure for the poet. And because the moral quality is that which is most developed, it is that also which exacts the most, and we may dare at our peril to neglect it.

If the drama has really come into vogue through so bad a tendency of the age, which I do not doubt, reform should be commenced with the drama, and air and light should be let in upon Art by driving out the common imitation of nature. And this, it seems to me, could be best done, by the introduction of symbolic shifts, which, in all that does not belong to the true world of Art of the poet, and, therefore, is not to be exhibited, but merely indicated, should take the place of the subject. I have not yet been able fully to unfold to myself this idea of the symbolical in poetry, but there seems to me to be much in it. Were its use once defined, the natural consequence would be, that poetry would purify itself, would contract its world into a narrower and more significant compass, and within the same become so much the more effective.

I had always a certain faith in the Opera, that out of it, as out of the choruses of the ancient festival of Bacchus, tragedy would develope itself in a higher form. In the Opera, one is free from that servile imitation of nature, and, although only under the name of indulgence, in this way the ideal might steal upon the stage. Through the power of music, and through a freer harmonious excitement of the senses, the Opera attunes the mind to a finer sensibility; here then is really, even in pathos, a freer play, because Music accompanies it, and the wonderful, which is here borne with, necessarily creates indifference as to the subject.

I am very anxious to see Meyer's treatise ; no doubt many applications to poetry will be deducible from it.

By degrees I get into my work again, but with this horrible weather it is really hard to keep one's mind elastic.

May you soon be free, and bring with you to me, activity, courage, and life. Fare you right well.

SCH.

CCCXCVII. (b)

As I expect early to-day a company to see Meyer's works, I will only herewith thank you for your and Humboldt's letter.

I am of your opinion that we must separate so severely, only in order afterwards to be able to allow oneself some scope by making adoptions from foreign sources. One works altogether differently from principles than from instinct, and a deviation, of the necessity whereof one is convinced, cannot become a fault.

Theoretic views cannot much longer suffice me ; I must now once more go to work, and for that I must betake myself to the old Jena sofa, as to a tripod. Fare you right well. I am sorry that your dear wife hurried away again so soon, and could not even make a pilgrimage to our treasures of Art. The hope which you had in the Opera, you would lately have seen fulfilled in Don Juan in a high degree ; in that respect, however, this piece stands quite isolated, and through Mozart's death, all prospect of anything similar is frustrated.

WEIMAR, 30th December, 1797.

G.







